SHAKESPEARE'S

MACBETH



Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire?

M. R. Brothers - Lahore

SHAKESPEARE

MACBETH

CONTAINING
ELABORATE INTRODUCTION, COMPLETE PARAPHRASE, EXHAUSTIVE NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS, CHARACTER-SKETCHES, QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS.

BY
TWO EXPERIENCED PROFESSORS OF ENGLISH

Price Rs. 5/-

M. R. BROTHERS
Educational Publishers and Booksellers
URDU BAZAR — LAHORE

REVISED EDITION

Panjab University

B. A.
COMPOSITION PAPERS B

Solved up-to-date

M. R. BROTHERS — LAHORE

Printed by Khawaja Ghulam Mohammad, Proprietor, at the Sunbeam Art Press, 41, Chamberlain Road, Lahore and Published by M. R. Brothers, Urdu Bazar, Lahore.

XII. (a) SHAKESPEARE USE OF PROSE IN MACBETH ... 66
(b) Dramatic Irony in Macbeth ... 68
(c) Dramatic Relief ... 69
(d) Poetic Justice in Macbeth ... 71

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

1. MACBETH ... 73
2. LADY MACBETH ... 80
3. BANQUO ... 84
4. DUNCAN ... 87
5. MACDUFF ... 88
6. LADY MACDUFF ... 90
7. MALCOLM ... 91
8 ROSE ... 92

MACBETH—Text with marginal notes and paraphrase opposite ... 1

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS ... 197

QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS ... 368

201

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE ... 1

INTRODUCTION TO MACBETH ...

I. THE STORY OF MACBETH ... 11

II. THE SOURCES OF MACBETH ... 21

III. DATE & COMPOSITION OF MACBETH ... 25

IV. SHAKESPEARE'S CONCEPTION OF TRAGEDY ... 33

V. THE HERO IN SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY ... 35

VI. THE VILLIAN AS HERO IN MACBETH —DIFFICULTY OF THE THEME OF MACBETH ... 37

VII. NATURE OR SOURCE OF THE TRAGEDY IN MACBETH ... 40

VIII. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MACBETH ... 43

IX. SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF THE SUPER-NATURAL IN MACBETH ... 49

(*i*) Ghosts and Witches ... 50

(*ii*) The Idea of Fate ... 55

(*iii*) Tragic Irony ... 57

(*iv*) Pathetic fallacy ... 58

X. THE RELATION OF CHARACTER TO DESTINY ... 60

XI. THE ATMOSPHERE OF MACBETH ... 64

INTRODUCTION TO SHAKESPEARE

I. LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

The life of the greatest Dramatist of the World is enveloped in mystery and obscurity and "all that we know with certainty" to quote Stevens "is that Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children; that he went to London where he appeared as an actor, and wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died and was buried". Though the material at our disposal regarding Shakespeare's life is really very scanty, yet it is possible, out of whatever meagre historical and legendary information that we possess about him, to construct a tolerable biography of the man. Shakespeare's life falls into three broad divisions.

(*i*) Life in Stratford-on-Avon (1564—86).
(*ii*) Life in London (1586—1610).
(*iii*) Life in Stratford Again (1610—1616).

Life in Stratford-on-Avon. William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, John Shakespeare, was a farmer's son and a prosperous trader in leather, meat and agricultural products. Of Shakespeare's education, not much is known, except that he probably attended the local free Grammar school where he got a smattering of Latin and Greek. When Shakespeare was about fourteen, his father's fortune began to decline. He was entangled in acute pecuniary embarrassments and young Shakespeare had to leave school to share with his father the burden of maintaining the family. He applied himself to the trade of a butcher. In 1582, at the age of 19 he married Anne Hathway who was eight years older than her boy husband. Though he had little schooling in the ordinary sense of the word, yet his real teachers were the men and women and the natural influences which surrounded him. Stratford is a little village situated on the banks of Avon which is remarkable for 'the perfection of quiet English Scenery' and wealth of natural beauty. Near at hand was the forest of Arden. These surroundings made a deep impression on the young poet who had a keen eye for all

he saw. "Every phase of the natural beauty of this exquisite region is reflected in his poetry, just as his characters reflect the nobility, littleness, vices, emotions, prejudices and traditions of the people about him." About 1586 Shakespeare left his Stratford, joined Burbage's Company of players and went to London.

According to tradition Shakespeare was compelled to leave the country as he had incurred the wrath of Sir Thomas Lucy firstly by stealing a deer from his park and subsequently by levelling a scurrilous satire against him when summoned for trial for that offence.

Life in London. Not much is known about his life in London, the period of his great creative activity. His plays are the only material on which we can base our conclusions about his life. It is evident from them that within the first five years of his life in London he had gained entrance to the society of gentlemen and scholars, had mastered their characteristic mannerisms and expressions and was thus fully prepared to weave into his dramas the whole life of the English people.

Shakespeare was probably trained like his fellow dramatists, first as an actor, then as a reviser of old plays and then as an independent dramatist. By 1592 he is mentioned as a successful actor and playwright. Shakespeare's poems rather than his plays, mark the beginning of his success. *Venus and Adonis* gained him a great popularity and its dedication, in 1593, to the Earl of Southampton is believed to have brought him a substantial reward, which may have laid the foundation of his business success. Henceforth his popularity and success in business grew amazingly. He became one of the principal proprietors of the Globe and Black Friars theatres in which his plays were represented.

Now Shakespeare had a fortune for himself and had won the esteem of his countrymen. Actors and playwrights were looked down upon in those days and his aim in adopting this profession merely was to amass wealth, raise his status and ultimately settle down as a respectable farmer in the beautiful and peaceful countryside of Stratford.

Life in Stratford again. With the wealth thus obtained through his shares in the London theatres, he purchased lands in the Stratford county, bought the New Place; the largest house in the town and about 1510 he re-settled permanently at Stratford where he led a retired quiet life until he died in 1616.

Development of his Dramatic Genius. A clear notion of the development of Shakespeare's Dramatic genius is perhaps of greater interest and usefulness to a student of literature than his biography, hence a brief note on the point will not be out of place. Shakespeare has left about 4.5 plays, some tragedies and some comedies all of which have been admired by the critics, but four of the tragedies : *Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet,* and *Othello* have been ranked as absolutely the greatest plays in world's dramatic literature. A careful reading of his works creates an impression of four distinct periods in his creative life or four clear stages in the development of his dramatic genius.

II. FOUR PERIODS OF HIS CAREER AS DRAMATIST

(*i*) 1588--1594. A period of apprenticeship and early experimentation—During this period, Shakespeare probably wrote his early poems, some of his historical plays and a few comedies The dramatic work of this period seems to be in close imitation of that of his predecessors particularly Marlowe. The period is marked by youthfulness and exuberance of imagination, by extravagance of language and the frequent use of rhymed couplets with his blank verse The important works composed in this period are *Venus and Adonis, Love's Labour Lost, Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Richard III*

(ii) 1595—1600. A period of Growth and Development. – In this period Shakespeare wrote three great historical plays *Henry VI,* Parts I and II and *Henry V,* some of his finest comedies like *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night.* This may be called *the period of great comedies.* The poet bathes everything in the golden light of joy and frolic. The work of this period is distinguished by better plots,

more artistic work, display of a greater knowledge of human nature and subtlety of character-delineation.

(*iii*) **1600—1607. A period of gloom and depression.** —This may be called the period of great tragedies. In this period Shakespeare attained perfect harmony of thought and language but as a result of his long study of human life, his outlook on life became serious and melancholy. He began to contemplate deeper problems of life. The principal works of this period, besides a few romances, are his great tragedies *Othello, Lear, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet* seem to mark the end of this period. In both we have heroes who are types of persons who do not owe their fall to any base element in their character but are rather too good to live in this world of intrigue and selfishness. Thus we find a sort of deep sadness and pessimism in Shakespeare during those years, though it cannot be exactly accounted for.

(*iv*) **1608—1611. A period of restored calm and serenity.**—This period marks a calm after a storm. Now Shakespeare again takes to comedy but it is a comedy of a different nature. *Cymbeline, Winter's Tale* and *Tempest* which belong to this period "are all bathed", in the words of Dowden, "in a light of kindliness and tolerance, the light that falls from an old man's eyes".

III. SHAKESPEARE'S GENIUS

A library of books has been written on Shakespeare, and still books are pouring in, attempting to reveal the dark recesses of this myriad-minded genius. Every poet has paid his tribute to Shakespeare; every critic has contributed something to Shakespearean criticism. No other poet has received such universal recognition as Shakespeare: all nations vie with one another in paying their homage to this man of wonderful genius—"the giant of Parnassus's hill, the pride, the monarch of mankind." What is there in the works of Shakespeare that calls forth this universal tribute of admiration? It is absolutely impossible to notice here all the qualities of his versatile genius. All that can be attempted here is to set down some of the outstanding features of his work.

(i) **His Universality.**—Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare, "He was not of an age, but of all time." We may further say that he was not of one land but of all lands. The appeal of Shakespeare is not limited to time and space; it is growing more and more with time, and is widening with the extent of knowledge to the furthest confines of the globe. "Free of every theory, accepting all of life, uniting the real and the poetic, appealing to the most various men, to a rude workman as to a wit, Shakespeare's drama is a great river of life and beauty. All who thirst for art or truth, the comic or the tender, ecstasy or satire, light or shade, can stop to drink from its waters, and at almost every instant of their changing moods find the one drop to slake their thirst". Coleridge pays his tribute to Shakespeare, "the greatest genius that perhaps human nature has yet produced, our myriad-minded Shakespeare". Dryden says, "He was the man, who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul."

(*ii*) **Characterisation.**—"In sheer prodigality of output, Shakespeare is unrivalled in literature. From king to clown, from lunatic and demi-devil to saint and seer, from lover to misanthrope—all are revealed with the hand of the master." His gift of characterisation, unique and unexampled, was the outcome of "a sensibility, which was affected by every object in nature, every emotion in man, of a sympathy that enabled Shakespeare to feel with and for every change in the physical world, every mood in the spiritual, of that intensity with which he could throw his whole strong, tender self into his characters, of that insight, that imagination which showed him what was at the heart of every man and thing with which he dealt".

(*iii*) **Impartiality.**—An important feature of his characterisation is his attitude of impartiality. He moves in a large scheme of things, where the sun rises on the evil as on the good. In fact, 'he seems indifferent to good and evil; he has the eye of the creator viewing bright and dismal things alike, provided they are apt and real. Hence follows the vital force that resides in the creations of Shakespeare. They live, move and utter speech; they are rounded, entire and capable'.

(iv) **Originality.**—"In the narrowest sense of the term, Shakespeare took no trouble to be original." He followed the custom of the time and borrowed freely from other plays, chronicles and tales; to these he is indebted chiefly for his plots. But the wonderful structures of art and imagination that he has built upon these bare hints, are entirely his own. In his mature works, the interest in the plot becomes subordinate to the development of character, the highest achievement of the dramatist's art.

(v) **Style.** "For lack of a better name we call Shakespeare's style Shakespearean. One can instantly recognise it even in other authors. It is a difficult, almost an impossible matter to define it. There is aptness and quotability in it; sheaves of Shakespeare's expression have passed into common speech. To a very great degree, it possesses sweetness, strength and flexibility: and above all, it has a certain inevitable and final felicity that is the true mark of genius." Shakespeare's style is above all picturesque: it calls up before our mind's eye concrete pictures that not only fill the mind but satisfy the imagination. He is not content with expressing ideas in the abstract, but gives them a concrete form that turns those abstract fancies into vivid pictures. In his mature productions of the third and fourth periods, his style acquires a new energy and flexibility. Hudson rightly says, "In his hands the language is like a grand cathedral organ, with its every touch at his instant command, from the softest notes which the most delicate spirit of sense can apprehend to the lordliest harmonies that mortal hearing is able to sustain."

IV. THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

The play-house is an important factor in the drama. Of all forms of literature, the drama is most affected by material circumstances. The novelist or the poet may expect to get his reward after some time, or even after years of patient waiting; but the dramatist cannot afford to wait. He appeals not to future ages but to the audience of the evening. Therefore he has to adapt his plays to the conditions of the stage on which it will be performed, to the actors,

who will act them, and to the audience who will witness them. Shakespeare, who sought to write plays that would catch, had necessarily to take account of the limitations of his stage and of the actors.

When Shakespeare arrived in London some time about 1586, theatrical representations used to be held in public theatres and in the halls of the royal palaces and of the Inns of Court. There were three public theatres in London at the time, and Shakespeare's plays used to be exhibited in any one of these till 1599, when the Globe Theatre, which was the permanent headquarters of Shakespeare's company, was built. Of course, his plays were often played in the court; but as they were meant for the public theatre, it had a considerable influence upon his stage-craft.

The Globe Theatre, which was built in 1599, and in which most of Shakespeare's plays were staged, was a typical Elizabethan playhouse. It was circular in structure, and the inside yard was open to the sky, and was surrounded by three tiers of galleries, looking down upon the yard, or 'pit'. This pit had no seats, and the poorer spectators used to remain standing. Admission to it cost one penny (6d. in modern money), and this crowd of standing spectators was known as groundlings. Seats were provided in tiers of galleries which ran round the 'pit', one above the other.

The stage itself was projected into the yard, so that when the house was crowded, the actors were surrounded on three sides. Above the stage there was a thatched roof that protected the players from rain, but there was no side or front curtains. At the back of the stage on either side there were two doors, by which the characters entered and disappeared. Between them there was a third door hidden by a curtain, and the recess into which it opened, formed a kind of inner stage (which could be used to represent the bed-chamber of Desdemona, the cell of Prospero, or the tomb of Juliet). Over this recess, there was an upper stage, which could be used whenever any upper scene was needed ; it represented the upper storey of the house, or the balcony of Juliet's bedroom. There was no curtain to conceal the stage, so the

scenes of the drama began with an entrance, and ended with an exit. In tragedies, the dead bodies had to be carried off the stage in a funeral procession ; the dead bodies of Hamlet and others had to be borne away. The curtain at the back indicated the scene of action by means of crude pictures painted on cloth. There was but little scenery, but what there was, was most crude. What in fact was lacking in the scenery was made up for by the description of the poet. Had there been elaborate scenery in the Elizabethan stage as we have now, we would miss the rich descriptive poetry of Shakespeare. The Elizabethan audience had no experience of the elaborate realism of the modern stage ; they would easily accept the representation of distant things or distant places. They would not quarrel with the dramatist or the theatre managers on the score of absurdities or anomalies ; they could with their own imagination supplement the defects of the stage. Thus, the Elizabethan audience seems to have been more imaginative than the modern audience, who would not hear the notes of a cuckoo unless they were actually heard.

Another result of the lack of curtains was that the scenes would have to be ended by the players actually walking out of the stage ; hence in Shakespeare's plays we seldom see any scene end on a climax. The close of even the most overwhelming scenes of Shakespeare's tragedies is quiet, or sometimes even tame ; the dead body of the hero has to be borne away in order to leave the stage clear.

"There was apparently no scenery, and plays were acted in day-light. The Elizabethan actor was thus without the effects produced on the modern stage by lighting, scenery, realistic or symbolic, and elaborate orchestral effect. In their place he gained his effects by a direct assault on the emotions and the imagination of the spectators. Poetry was a natural medium for dramatic speech, especially at exalted moments, and a good actor could carry his audience with him by the emotional effect of rhetoric."

The wardrobe of the Elizabethan theatre was expensive, but the costumes of the players were all Elizabethan. There was no intention to reproduce the costumes of a play. The

properties of the theatre were hardly adequate ; but those that were there were utilised by the dramatist. Among the properties there was evidently a human head, and Shakespeare often represents somebody displaying this head transfixed on a spear ; Guiderius, in *Cymbeline*, severs the head of Cloten and brings it on the stage ; Macduff cuts off the head of Macbeth and displays it.

As woman actresses had not appeared in Shakespeare's time, boys used to take the parts of women. Hence we often find Shakespeare introducing women disguised as men ; and as boys, capable of playing female parts, could not be many at a time, the plays of Shakespeare do not contain many women.

The drama is a composite art ; it is a resultant of many forces, of which the stage is one. The condition of the stage at a particular time has its influence on the drama—on its structure, its acting and even its style. The Elizabethan stage was responsible for the variety of scenes and the loose-knit action in Shakespearean drama; in acting, it no doubt led to rhetorical delivery and gesture : and in regard to the style, it was the stage again, that was responsible for the florid verse which lent itself to loud declamation.

The Elizabethan stage had no scenery, and this absence of scenery had a considerable influence on the structure of a play. Because there was no front curtain, the dramatist could not give any initial surprise to his audience, nor could end his scenes on a climax. The audience in fact would not understand where the scene was located—in a street, or a room, on the seaside or on an open window. And because the scenic background was indefinite, the scenes could be frequently changed. This is why we find comparatively short scenes in Shakespeare ; scenes could be quickly changed because there was no scenery to change. The locality of a scene would sometimes be indicated by certain properties (*viz* flowers, plants and the like), but as there were but few properties, they were allowed to remain in the succeeding scenes where they were not necessary. The back-curtain and the upper window persisted in every scene, whether it represented a seaside or a battlefield. The audience took it as a matter of course ; to them the stage

was the stage—it represented nowhere and therefore everywhere.

As dramatic illusion could not be produced by means of scenery, the actor and the dramatist attemped in their own ways to remedy the defect. The lack of scenery was made up for by the voices and gestures of the actors. They delivered their speeches (in sonorous blank verse) in an exaggerated style, in order to create some kind of dramatic illusion ; the actor had to convince his audience that he was at that time Hamlet or Lear, not Mr. X of the Globe Theatrical Company. The dramatist has also his share in creating this kind of illusion ; he had to write in an inflated style that could easily lend itself to declamation. And in order that this kind of style might not appear to be incongruous, he placed his scene of action in far-off lands like Venice, Sicily or in the land of his own imagination, like the Athens haunted by fairies or the Enchanted Island. This is the reason why Shakespeare preferred far-off lands and the remote past. "To him the setting was idealised. He felt no need of scenery. He imagined it and it was there. But its very absence led to a heightened poetic style. An appeal to the ear had to compensate for the lack of appeal to the eye." Thus we owe to the conditions of the Elizabethan stage Shakespeare's splendour of diction. Sometimes, when it was necessary, Shakespeare shows the exact locality in the dialogue.

"What country, friends, is this"? asks Viola.
"This is Illyria, lady," the sea-captain answers.

But the audience never cared where Illyria might be. To them it did not matter whether the country was Illyria or Bohemia with sea-coast. To them the play was the thing, and Shakespeare also cared but little for these details He peopled his plays with Elizabethan nobles and rustics, whether the scene of action was in Denmark or ancient Britain. He elevated the action to the romantic sphere, and never bothered over the petty realistic details. In fact in the Elizabethan stage (as in Bottam's stage) no realism could be expected. Thus the crudities of the stage had much to do with Shakespeare's choice of romantic themes.

INTRODUCTION TO MACBETH

I. THE STORY OF MACBETH

When Duncan the Meek reigned King of Scotland there lived a great thane, or lord, called Macbeth This Macbeth was a near kinsman to the king, and in great esteem of court for his valour and conduct in the wars ; an example of which he had lately given, in defeating a rebel army assisted by the troops of Norway in terrible numbers.

The two Scottish generals, Macbeth and Banquo, returning victorious from this great battle, their way lay over blasted heath, where they were stopped by the strange appearance of three figures like women, except that they had beards and their withered skins and wild attire made them look not like any earthly creatures, Macbeth first addressed them, when they, seemingly offended, laid each one her choppy finger upon her skinny lips, in token of silence ; and the first of them saluted Macbeth with the title of Thane of Glamis. The general was not a little startled to find himself known by such creatures ; but how much more when the second of them followed up that salute by giving him the title of Thane of Cawdor, to which honour he had no pretensions ; and again the third bid him "All hail ! thou shalt be king hereafter !" Such a prophetic greeting might well amaze him, who knew that while the king's sons lived he could not hope to succeed to the throne. Then turning to Banquo, they pronounced him, in a sort of ridling term, to be *lesser than Macbeth and greater ! not so happy, but much happier !* and prophesied that though he should never reign, yet his sons after him should be kings in Scotland. They then turned into air and vanished, by which the generals knew them to be the weird sisters or witches.

While they stood pondering on the strangeness of this adventure, there arrived certain messengers from the king, who were empowered by him to confer upon Macbeth the dignity of Thane of Cawdor. An event so miraculously corresponding with the prediction of the witches astonished Macbeth, and he stood wrapped in amazement, unable to make reply to the

messengers; and in that point of time swelling hopes arose in his mind that the prediction of the third witch might in like manner have its accomplishment, and that he should one day reign king in Scotland.

Turning to Banquo, he said, "Do you not hope that your children shall be kings, when what the witches promised to me has so wonderfully come to pass?" "That hope," answered the general, "might enkindle you to aim at the throne: but often times these ministers of darkness tell us truths in little things, to betray us into deeds of greatest consequence."

But the wicked suggestions of the witches had sunk too deep into the mind of Macbeth to allow him to attend to the warnings of the good Banquo. From that time he bent all his thoughts how to compass the throne of Scotland.

Macbeth had a wife, to whom he communicated the strange prediction of the weird sisters, and its partial accomplishment. She was a bad, ambitious woman, and so long as her husband and herself could arrive at greatness, she cared not much by what means. She spurred on the reluctant purpose of Macbeth, who felt compunction at the thoughts of blood, and did not cease to represent the murder of the king as a step absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of the flattering prophecy.

It happened at this time that the king, who, out of his royal condescension would often times visit his principal nobility upon gracious terms, came to Macbeth's house, attended by his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and a numerous train of thanes and attendants, the more to honour Macbeth for the triumphal success of his wars.

The castle of Macbeth was pleasantly situated, and the air about it was sweet and wholesome, which appeared by the nests which the martlet or swallow, had built under all the jutting friezes and buttresses of the building, wherever it found a place of advantage; for where those birds most breed and haunt, the air is observed to be delicate. The king entered well pleased with the place, and not less so with the attentions and respect of his honoured hostess, Lady Macbeth, who had the

art of covering treacherous purposes with smiles, and could look like the innocent flower, while she was indeed the serpent under it.

The King, being tired with his journey, went early to bed, and in his state-room two grooms of his chamber (as was the custom) slept beside him. He had been unusually pleased with his reception, and had made presents before he retired to his principal officers; and among the rest, had sent a rich diamond to Lady Macbeth, greeting her by the name of his most kind hostess.

Now was the middle of night, when over half the world nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse men's minds asleep, and none but the wolf and the murderer are abroad. This was the time when Lady Macbeth waked to plot the murder of the king. She would not have undertaken a deed so abhorrent to her sex, but that she feared her husband's nature, that it was too full of the milk of human kindness to do a contrived murder. She knew him to be ambitious, but withal to be scrupulous, and not yet prepared for that height of crime which commonly in the end accompanies inordinate ambition. She had won him to consent to the murder, but she doubted his resolution; and she feared that the natural tenderness of his disposition (more humane than her own) would come between and defeat the purpose. So with her own hands armed with a dagger she approached the king's bed, having taken care to ply the grooms of his chamber so with wine that they slept intoxicated, and careless of their charge. There lay Duncan in a sound sleep after the fatigues of his journey, and as she viewed him earnestly there was something in his face, as he slept, which resembled her own father, and she had not the courage to proceed.

She returned to confer with her husband. His resolution had begun to stagger. He considered that there were strong reasons against the deed. In the first place, he was not only a subject, but a near kinsman to the king; and he had been his host and entertainer that day, whose duty, by the laws of hospitality, it was to shut the door against his murderers, not bear the knife himself. Then he considered how just and

merciful a king this Duncan had been, how clear of offence to his subjects, how loving to his nobility and in particular to him; that such kings are the peculiar care of Heaven, and their subjects doubly bound to revenge their deaths. Besides, by the favours of the king, Macbeth stood high in the opinion of all sorts of men, and how would those honours be stained by the reputation of so foul a murder!

In these conflicts of the mind Lady Macbeth found her husband inclining to the better part, and resolving to proceed no further. But she, being a woman not easily shaken from her evil purpose, began to pour in at his ears words which infused a portion of her own spirit into his mind, assigning reason upon reason why he should not shrink from what he had undertaken; how easy the deed was; how soon it would be over; and how the action of one short night would give to all their nights and days to come sovereign sway and royalty! Then she threw contempt on his change of purpose, and accused him of fickleness and cowardice; and declared that she was a mother, and knew how tender it was to love her own offspring; but she would, while it was smiling in her face, have plucked it from her breast and dashed its brains out if she had so sworn to do it, as he had sworn, to perform that murder. Then she added, how practicable it was to lay the guilt of the deed upon the drunken, sleepy grooms. And with the valour of her tongue she so chastised his sluggish resolutions, that he once more summoned up courage to the awful business.

So, taking the dagger in his hand, he softly stole in the dark to the room where Duncan lay; and as he went, he thought he saw another dagger in the air, with the handle towards him, and on the blade and at the point of it drops of blood; but when he tried to grasp at it, it was nothing but air, a mere phantasm proceeding from his own hot and oppressed brain and the business he had in hand.

Getting rid of this fear, he entered the room of the king, whom he dispatched with one stroke of his dagger. Just as he had done the murder one of the grooms who slept in the chamber laughed in his sleep; and the other cried "Murder"

which woke them both; but they said a short prayer: one of them said: "God bless us!" and the other answered "Amen" and addressed themselves to sleep again. Macbeth, who stood listening to them, tried to say "Amen" when the fellow said "God bless us!" but though he had most need of a blessing the word stuck in his throat, and he could not pronounce it.

Again he thought he heard a voice which cried, "Sleep no more; Macbeth doth murder sleep, the innocent sleep that nourishes life." Still it cried, "Sleep no more", to all the house. "Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more."

With such horrible imaginations Macbeth returned to his listening wife, who began to think he had failed of his purpose, and that the deed was somehow frustrated. He came in so distracted a state that she reproached him with his want of firmness, and sent him to wash his hands of the blood which stained them, while she took his dagger, with purpose to stain the cheeks of the grooms with blood, to make it seem their guilt.

Morning came, and with it the discovery of the murder, which could not be concealed; and though Macbeth and his lady made great show of grief, and the proofs against the grooms (the dagger being produced against them, and their faces smeared with blood) were sufficiently strong, yet the entire suspicion fell upon Macbeth, whose inducements to such a deed where so much more forcible than poor silly grooms could be supposed to have; and Duncan's two sons fled. Malcolm, the eldest, sought refuge in the English court, and the youngest, Donalbain, made his escape to Ireland

The king's sons, who should have succeeded him, having thus vacated the throne, Macbeth as next heir was crowned king, and thus the prediction of the weird sisters was literally accomplished.

Though placed so high, Macbeth and his queen could not forget the prophecy of the weird sisters, that, though Macbeth should be king yet not his children, but the children of Banquo should be kings after him. The thought of this, and

that they had defiled their hands with blood, and done so great crimes, only to place the posterity of Banquo upon the throne, so rankled within them that they determined to put to death both Banquo and his son, to make void the predictions of the weird sisters, which in their own case had been so remarkably brought to pass.

For this purpose they made a great supper, to which they invited all the chief thanes; and among the rest, with marks of particular respect, Banquo and his son Fleance were invited. The way by which Banquo was to pass to the palace at night was beset by murderers appointed by Macbeth, who stabbed Banquo; but in the scuffle Fleance escaped From that same Fleance descended a race of monarchs who afterwards filled the Scottish throne, ending with James the Sixth of Scotland and the First of England, under whom the two crowns of England and Scotland were united.

At supper the queen, whose manners were in the highest degree affable and royal, played the hostess with a gracefulness and attention which conciliated everyone present, and Macbeth discoursed freely with his thanes and nobles, saying that all that was honourable in the country was under his roof, if he had but his good friend Banquo present, whom yet he hoped he should rather have to chide for neglect than to lament for any mischance. Just at these words the ghost of Banquo entered the room, and placed himself on the chair which Macbeth was about to occupy. Though Macbeth was a bold man, and one that could have faced the devil without trembling, at this horrible sight his cheeks turned white with fear, and he stood quite unmanned, with his eyes fixed upon the ghost. His queen and all the nobles, who saw nothing, but perceived him gazing (as they thought) upon an empty chair, took it for a fit of distraction; and she reproached him, whispering that it was but the same fancy which made him see the dagger in the air when he was about to kill Duncan. But Macbeth continued to see the ghost, and gave no heed to all they could say, while he addressed it with distracted words, yet so significant that his queen, fearing the dreadful secret would be disclosed, in great haste dismissed the guests, excusing the infirmity of Macbeth as a disorder he was often troubled with.

To such dreadful fancies Macbeth was subject. His queen and he had their sleep afflicted with terrible dreams, and the blood of Banquo troubled them not more than the escape of Fleance, whom now they looked upon as father to a line of kings who should keep their posterity out of the throne. With these miserable thoughts they found no peace and Macbeth determined once more to seek out the weird sisters and know from them the worst.

He sought them in a cave upon the heath, where they, who knew by foresight of his coming, were engaged in preparing their dreadful charms, by which they conjured up infernal spirits to reveal to them futurity. Their horrid ingredients were toads, bats, and serpents, the eye of a newt, and the tongue of a dog, the leg of a lizard and the wing of the night owl, the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, the maw of the ravenous salt-sea shark, the root of the poisonous hemlock (this to have effect must be digged in the dark), the gall of a goat, with slips of the yew tree that roots itself in graves: all these were set on to boil in a great kettle, or cauldron, which, as fast as it grew too hot, was cooled with a baboon's blood. By these charms they bound the infernal spirits to answer their questions.

It was demanded of Macbeth whether he would have his doubts resolved by them or by their masters, the spirits. He, nothing daunted by the dreadful ceremonies which he saw, boldly answered: "Where are they? Let me see them." And they called the spirits, which were three. And the first arose in the likeness of an armed head, and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him beware of the Thane of Fife; for which caution Macbeth thanked him, for Macbeth had entertained a jealousy of Macduff, the Thane of Fife.

And the second spirit arose in the likeness of a child and he called Macbeth by name, and bid him have no fear, but laugh to scorn the power of men; that he bore a charmed life; and he advised him to be bold and resolute. "Then live, Macduff!" cried the king: 'what need I fear of thee? But yet I will make assurance doubly sure. Thou shalt not live; that I may tell pale-hearted Fear it lies, and sleep in spite of thunder."

That spirit being dismissed, a third arose in the form of a child crowned, with a tree in his hand. He called Macbeth by name, and comforted him against conspiracies, saying that he should never be vanquished until the wood of Birnam to Dunsinane Hill should come against him. "Sweet bodements! good!" cried Macbeth; who can unfix the forest, and move it from its earth-bound roots? I see I shall live the usual period of man's life, and not be cut off by a violent death. But my heart throbs to know one thing. Tell me, if your art can tell so much, if Banquo's issue shall ever reign in this kingdom?" Here the cauldron sank into the ground, and a noise of music was heard, and eight shadows, like kings, passed by Macbeth, and Banquo last, who bore a glass which showed the figures of many more, and Banquo all marked with blood, smiled upon Macbeth and pointed to them; by which Macbeth knew that these were the posterity of Banquo who should reign after him in Scotland; and the witches, with a sound of soft music, and with dancing, making a show of duty and welcome to Macbeth, vanished. And from this time the thoughts of Macbeth were all bloodthirsty and dreadful.

The first thing he heard when he got out of the witches' cave was that Macduff, Thane of Fife, had fled to England, to join the army which was forming against him under Malcolm, the eldest son of the late king, with intent to displace Macbeth and set Malcolm, the right heir, upon the throne. Macbeth, stung with rage, set upon the castle of Macduff, and put his wife and children, whom the thane had left behind, to the sword, and extended the slaughter to all who claimed the least relationship to Macduff.

These and such-like deeds alienated the minds of all his chief nobility from him. Such as could, fled to join with Malcolm and Macduff, who were now approaching with a powerful army, which they had raised in England; and the rest secretly wished success to their arms, though for fear of Macbeth they could take no active part. His recruits came in slowly. Everybody hated the tyrant; nobody loved or honoured him, but all suspected him; and he began to envy the condition of Duncan whom he had murdered, who slept soundly in his grave, against whom treason had done its worst: steel nor poison,

domestic malice nor foreign levies, could hurt him any longer.

While these things were acting, the queen, who had been the sole partner in his wickedness, in whose company he could sometimes seek a momentary repose from those terrible dreams which afflicted them both nightly, died, it is supposed, by her own hands, unable to bear the remorse of guilt and public hate; by which event he was left alone, without a soul to love or care for him, or a friend to whom he could confide his wicked purposes.

He grew careless of life, and wished for death; but the near approach of Malcolm's army roused in him what remained of his ancient courage, and he determined to die (as he expressed it) "with armour on his back." Besides this, the hollow promises of the witches had filled him with a false confidence and he remembered the sayings of the spirits, that he was never to be vanquished till Birnam Wood should come to Dunsinane, which he thought could never be. So he shut himself up in his castle, whose impregnable strength was such as defied a siege. Here he sullenly waited the approach of Malcolm. Soon, upon a day, there came a messenger to him, pale and shaking with fear, almost unable to report that which he had seen; for he averred that as he stood upon his watch on the hill, he looked towards Birnam, and to his thinking the wood began to move. "Liar and slave!" cried Macbeth; "if thou speakest false, thou shalt hang alive upon the next tree till famine end thee. If thy tale be true, I care not if thou dost as much by me;" for Macbeth now began to faint in resolution, and to doubt the equivocal speeches of the spirits. He was not to fear till Birnam Wood did move! "However," said he, "if this which he avouches be true, let us arm and out. There is no flying hence, not staying here. I begin to be weary of the sun, and wish my life at an end." With these desperate speeches he sallied forth upon the besiegers, who had now come up to the castle.

The strange appearance which had given the messenger an idea of a wood moving is easily solved. When the besieging army marched through the wood of Birnam, Malcolm, like a skilful general, instructed his soldiers to hew down every one a bough and bear it before him, by way of concealing the true

numbers of his host. This marching of the soldiers with boughs had at a distance the appearance which had frightened the messenger. Thus were the words of the spirit brought to pass, in a sense different from that in which Macbeth had understood them, and one great hold of his confidence was gone.

And now a severe skirmishing took place, in which Macbeth, though feebly supported by those who called themselves his friends, but in reality hated the tyrant and inclined to the party of Malcolm and Macduff, yet fought with the extreme of rage and valour, cutting to pieces all who were opposed to him till he came to where Macduff was fighting. Seeing Macduff, and remembering the caution of the spirit who had counselled him to avoid Macduff above all men, he would have turned, but Macduff, who had been seeking him through the whole fight, opposed his turning, and a fierce contest ensued, Macduff giving him many foul reproaches for the murder of his wife and children. Macbeth, whose soul was charged enough with blood of that family already, would still have declined the combat, but Macduff still urged him to it, calling him tyrant, murderer and villain.

Then Macbeth remembered the misleading words of the spirit, how he bore a charmed life, and no man should hurt him; and smiling confidently he said to Macduff: "Thou losest thy labour, Macduff. As easily thou mayest impress the air with thy sword as make me vulnerable. I bear a charmed life, which must not yield to any man."

"Then live!" said the scornful Macduff. "We will have a show of thee, as men show monsters, and a painted board, on which shall be written, 'Here men may see the tyrant!'"

"Never!" said Macbeth, whose courage returned with despair. "I will not live to kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet, and to be baited with the curses of the rabble. Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane, yet will I try my fortune." With these frantic words he threw himself upon Macduff, who, after a severe struggle, in the end overcame him, and cutting off his head made a present of it to the young and lawful king, Malcolm; who took upon him the government which, by the machinations of the usurper, he had so long

been deprived of, and ascended the throne of Duncan the Meek, amid the acclamations of the nobles and the people.

II. THE SOURCES OF MACBETH

(*i*) **What we mean by "Sources."**—Shakespeare was, in addition to being a writer of dramas, an actor and a producer of plays. He wrote plays for his own company, and it must have been a great effort and strain to keep up with the growing demand of the public for dramatic performances. Now Shakespeare never troubled to invent plots; he was content to hunt about in old British history, in folk-lore, or in continental and classical literature until he found some story which appealed to him as being capable of transformation into a successul drama. Unless he was writing a purely historical play, he re-modelled and transformed the events of the story which appealed to him in any way which seemed to him desirable, in order to make them more suitable for his stage and company. Some of the plays retain little resemblance to their original "Sources", and Shakespeare had from them the barest of suggestions.

(*ii*) **Holinshed's History.**—The plot of *Macbeth* was suggested by some old facts of Scottish history, derived from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, a record of the early history of Britain. It was from this same source that he derived the ideas for *King Lear*, *Cymbeline* and others. Holinshed himself had drawn his Scottish history from other writers who were not very reliable, so the picture of the Scottish king, Macbeth, which Holinshed presented, is not quite in accordance with facts. The main fact to remember is that the new king James had come from Scotland to England with the reputation of being a great authority on witchcraft, and the people of England were, in consequence, deeply interested in the supernatural. When Shakespeare found in *Holinshed* an episode of history dealing with the supernatural, this would at once appeal to him as being likely to appeal strongly to the popular tastes, as well as to awake the interest of the king.

(*iii*) **Macbeth of Holinshed different from Shakespeare's play.**—Shakespeare made not the slightest effort to

retain the facts of Holinshed's story. The historian depicts Duncan as a young and incompetent king, who had a brief and very unsuccessful reign. Macbeth, on the other hand, is shown by Holinshed to have been a wise and just ruler, who commanded the love and respect of his subjects. But even Holinshed did not do justice to the real Macbeth, who is described by a Scottish historian as "the greatest king that early Scotland had, respected by his enemies, honoured by the church, beloved by the Scottish people."

(*iv*) **Alterations in characters of Banquo and Lady Macbeth.**—The character of Banquo is changed also. In the historian's work, Banquo and Macbeth are shown as plotting together to kill the king, but here he is shown by Shakespeare as a virtuous and noble soldier. This was highly necessary, since the play was to show Banquo as the ancestor of James I. Lady Macbeth also is altered in the play from the queen that Holinshed describes, for he made her very selfish and anxious to obtain for herself the honour and power of royalty. Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, with all her faults is never selfish, but plots for her husband's sake.

(*v*) **The play a combination of two different stories from Holinshed.**—Certain events in the play are drawn from another part of Holinshed altogether. There is another story from Scottish history about a chief named Donwald, who murdered Kink Duff in his castle of Forres. He was also urged on by his wife to the deed. Donwald was reluctant, but ultimately drugged the servants in charge of King Duff's bedchamber, and in the morning slew them in order to put the blame on them. There is a suggestion of the supernatural in the events of the "Donwald story," for nature seems to show strange and unusual signs and the sun is obscured. Shakespeare borrowed all these facts and introduced them into the story of Macbeth, because his dramatic instinct told him how effective they would be in supplying dramatic and supernatural effect. So Shakespeare combined the two stories, selecting what seemed to him to be most suitable from each, and changing and making such additions of his own as he deemed to be desirable to increase the dramatic effect. Lady Macbeth is evidently suggested by the wife of Donwald. Shakespeare departs from both stories

in making Macbeth do the deed singlehanded, for the Macbeth of Holinshed was assisted by accomplices, and Donwald by servants.

(*vi*) **The three witches suggested by Holinshed.** The Macbeth story of Holinshed contains reference to three " weird sisters " who gave the king predictions, particularly warning him against Macduff. Other supernatural characters are also mentioned, namely " certain wizards " and " a certain witch " but Shakespeare had too much good sense to overload his play with supernatural characters. The three "weird sisters" were sufficient for him. Holinshed evidently meant them to be the Scandinavian goddesses of Destiny, or Norns, rather than mere witches, but it suited Shakespeare's purpose to fall into line with Elizabethan conceptions, and make them three typical witches, such as the people of the day believed in. Hecate is added in Shakespeare's play, but we cannot claim high merit for this.

(*vii*) **Supposed resemblance to Middleton's play.**— Much has been made of the resemblance which exists between *Macbeth*, and a certain play called *The Witch*, by an author named Middleton. Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed some passages from this ; others hold that later playwrights have combined Shakespeare with Middleton for the purpose of stage effect. The two songs mentioned in the stage directions *Come away, Come away*, in III, V, 33 and *Black spirits*, IV, I, 43 are certainly found complete in Middleton's play. But the whole question is so hopelessly unknown that nothing can be done except to put forward ingenious theories which can neither be proved nor contradicted with certainty. It is the purpose here to deal with known facts, and not to give theories which must be qualified by "it is possible" and "the view has been expressed," and the like. There is every probability that the text of *Macbeth*, as we possess it, is incomplete, contains additions by other writers, and is in a different form from the original play by Shakespeare. Certain passages and scenes have been rejected by critics who pretend to distinguish an un-Shakespearean treatment in various lines. No time will be spent on this subject ; the tendency

of commonsense criticism in our times is that too much nonsense of this sort has been talked and written in the past. It is only possible to accept the play without question as we have it ; to assume that it is all the work of Shakespeare, and to judge it on its merits accordingly.

(*viii*) **The idea that fiends deceived men by their misleading predictions was very old.**—The belief that fiends deliberately deceived men by making their prophecies ambiguous, so that more than one meaning was possible, is a very old one. It is mentioned by Barber, the author of *The Brus*, writing more than two hundred years before Shakespeare. In his fourth book, Barber quotes instances from ancient history of men who had been tempted into enterprises by the predictions of spirits, only to fail miserably, and to find then that the predictions had quite a different meaning. Barber quotes the case of a chief who was told that if he made war against the king of France, he would enter Paris at the head of a great army. He did make war, and entered Paris at the head of a great army *of prisoners, himself being one.*

The most interesting point for the reader to keep in mind is that the "three weird sisters" of Holinshed are not witches, but rather Goddesses of Destiny. But the Elizabethan people did not know the Scandinavian Goddesses, whereas they did understand what witches were. Hence Shakespeare dressed his supernatural element in the ideas of his own day. I append a short account of this by Dr. Whitmore of Harvard University :

(*ix*) **The witches different from popular ideas.**—"In *Hamlet*, then, the native tradition reaches its most perfect expression, and the revenge-ghost his full development. In *Macbeth* we have a different approach to the supernatural, and one which results in an even finer achievement, involving a profounder conception of the forces in question. Shakespeare desires to bring before us the supernatural Powers which call into action the sinister impulse of Macbeth's nature. He has, however, no store of generally known mythology from which to derive such figures. A hint in Holinshed supplies him with the concept of the Weird

Sisters, Goddesses of Destiny, who met Macbeth on his day of triumph; but these are not creatures familiar to the general public of the time....So he must approach these unfamiliar creatures through something of common knowledge. Now the obvious channel through which every Elizabethan believed that the power of evil spirits could be exercised against mortals was that of witchcraft. Accordingly he presents his three Weird Sisters under the guise of witches. As such the audience would readily accept them, and by this acceptance they were led to Shakespeare's deeper conception......All that the sisters are represented as doing at the beginning of the play is perfectly suited to the idea that they are witches, and nothing more. We soon perceive, however, that important constituents of the idea of witchcraft are lacking." The differences to which Dr. Whitmore refers are the following: (1) The Witches in *Macbeth* possess magic powers in themselves, whereas the popular conception was that witches could only derive such powers by virtue of an agreement entered into with some spirit. (2) They do not demand any payment or return from Macbeth, nor seek to make him a servant of the powers of evil, as witches were supposed to do. All that they do is to reveal the future to Macbeth, but they do it in such a manner as to stimulate the hungry ambition which is in him already. This type of ambition is really *a capacity for crime as soon as the opportunity is presented*. The fact that the first prediction is fulfilled so promptly makes him take any means available to accomplish the other. Once Macbeth has started on the path of crime, he cannot retrace his steps. He thinks he can master the forces of fate and destiny, as represented by the witches, but in reality he is their toy, and they revenge themselves on him with all the irony ot fate.

III. DATE OF COMPOSITION OF MACBETH

A study of Shakespearean drama can never be complete without an attempt to fix the date of composition of the several plays. A chronological study of great writer is always important because it helps us to understand the growth and development of the author's genius and makes us realise the

wonderful progression in the art. There are two kinds of evidence available to fix the date of Shakespeare's plays—external evidence and internal evidence. The former especially is very valuable because it mainly deals with facts whereas the internal evidence, which has its basis for the most part on suppositions and conjectures, helps us to confirm what has been already established by the external evidence.

Conjectures as to the date of composition of Macbeth have varied from 1604 to 1610 with a decided preference for 1606. But considering the matter at hand the date of the play cannot be determined with absolute precision although several lists of internal evidence point to the year 1606 as being the year the tragedy was first produced.

Evidence for 1606 as the Date of Composition.

External Evidence. (1) In 'The Puritan' written by Middleton in 1607 there are some scenes which bear a close resemblance to the banquet scene in Macbeth. Middleton says : 'instead of a jester we'll have a ghost in a white sheet sit at the upper end of the table.' Some critics believe that Middleton got the idea of the Ghost from Shakespeare's Macbeth, where Banquo's Ghost appears and takes his seat in the head of the table right in the middle of the banquet. If there is any degree of truth in this surmise, then we can conclude that Shakespeare's *Macbeth* must have been written some time before 1607, and that it must have been a pretty popular play too.

(2) A 'History of Macbeth' was inserted in the new edition of Warner's 'Albion's England' published in 1606. This suggests that Shakespeare's *Macbeth* must have been already popular before that time. Albion's England tends to prove that the play cannot have been written later than 1606.

(3) Some critics believe that the royal visit of King James to the University of Oxford in 1606 would have given Shakespeare the idea of writing a play on this Scotish king. When King James visited the University, the students, borrowing a few ideas from the old Scottish History of Holinshed, received him dressed up as the weird sisters of destiny. It is

quite possible that this reception may have prompted Shakespeare to write a play on this chapter of the Scottish history.

(4) According to Bradley the following lines in Marston's *Sophonisba* published in 1606 are highly reminiscent of *Macbeth*. In Marston the Witch Erich the says : 'I know thy thought.'

Cf. *Macbeth*. First Witch. 'He knows thy thought.' Yet dreadful stood the fight' Cf. *Macbeth*, I, II-7 'doubtful it stood.'

(5) The lines 'Why, think you, lords, that 'tis ambition's spur.
That pricketh Caesar to these high attempts' are supposed to be modelled on Macbeth's soliloquy I. vii. 25.28.

(6) The Eighth book of Daniel's Civil Wars, 1609, has
'He draws a traverse twixt his grievances :
Looks like the time his eye made not report.'
This is supposed to be based on I. v. 61,62.

(7) There is a mention of 'that admirable gift hereditary to the anointed princes of this realm in curing the king's evil' in Camden's 'Remaines.' Perhaps Shakespeare has in his mind this passage when he wrote the lines

and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction.

Internal Evidence.—Besides these pieces of external evidence several references in the play to particular incidents of the period also help us to fix the year 1606 as the date of the play with a certain amount of certainty. Individually these pieces of evidence are of very little importance and cannot be much relied upon, but regarded collectively they hold some importance and confirm what has been already established by the external evidence.

(1) Some editors find a series of references in the Porter's speech which might be helpful to fix the probable date of the play.

1. 'Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in

both the scales against either scale.' Some find in these lines a reference to the trial of the Jesuit Garnet which took place in 1606. It has often been the practice of the Elizabethan dramatists to say some unkind word or other against the Jesuits whenever opportunity presented itself. Like his contemporaries Shakespeare also is perhaps having a hit against these religious fanatics without referring to any particular incident at all. We are told in the account of Garnet's trial published in 1606, that the Jesuit preachers taught their followers to equivocate upon oath. If Shakespeare really had in mind Garnet when he wrote these lines, then we can conclude that the play must have been written some time about the year 1606.

2. 'Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.' According to some there may be a reference here to the abundant harvest of the year 1606. The price of corn was at the lowest that year.

3. Antony Nixon in his *Black Year*, published in 1606, points out how the tailors 'took more than enough for fashion's sake.' These lines may have suggested to Shakespeare his porter's account in the third scene. 'Faith, here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose : come in tailor.'

(2) There are two passages in *Macbeth* where there is a reference to Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, which suggest that Shakespeare during the time he wrote *Macbeth* must also have been preparing his "Antony and Cleopatra." In the third scene of the first Act there is the reference to 'The insane root that takes the reason prisoner' which is mentioned in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*. Again, Macbeth commenting on his own condition says 'My genius is rebuked, as it is said, Mark Antony's was, by Caesar.' *Antony and Cleopatra* was produced before May 1606 and hence Macbeth must have been written before that date.

(3) Duncan before the execution of the Thane of Cawdor remarks: 'What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.' Some editors find in these lines a reference to the conspiracy

of the Earl of Gowry against James in 1605. After he was condemned, his titles and lands were bestowed on Sir James Murry.

(4) There is a distinct reference in the Fourth Act to the double coronation of James. Macbeth in the show of Eight Kings sees some kings. 'That two-fold balls and treble sceptres carry.' These lines must have been written after the union of England and Scotland in 1603 since we notice a positive reference to that incident.

(5) A large number of flattering allusions evidently meant as compliment to the Scottish King James can be seen all over. The references though often veiled are quite definite. The mention of the 'healing benediction' of the king is undoubtedly meant to flatter the reigning king, who claimed his descent from Banquo. James revived the practice of curing king's evil, and held that he could leave to 'the succeeding royalty, the healing benediction'. James I ascended the throne in 1603 and the various references show that this king must have been reigning while Shakespeare wrote this play.

(6) King James was interested in witchcraft and his book *Demonlogic* deals with witches and their practice. The interest manifested by the king in the supernatural may have been an additional incentive to Shakespeare to introduce witches in *Macbeth*.

(7) The Earl of Essex was condemned and exacted on a charge of high treason in 1601. After confessing his crime, he behaved with cool self-possession and met his death like a brave soldier. It is quite possible that Shakespeare had the death of Essex in mind when he speaks of Cawdor

'nothing in the life
Became him like the leaving to ; he died
As one that had been studied in his death
To throw away the dearest thing he owed
As't were a careless trifle.'

(8) The 'fatal bell-man' probably is drawn from the appointment of a Monitor at Newgate Prison in 1605 under an

endowment made by one Richard Dow, a merchant tailor, The incident aroused considerable public curiosity at the time.

Style and Diction.—Even in his earliest work Shakespeare was able to wield the stiff blank verse with considerable care although it was often intermingled with puns, quibbles, verbal conceits, and such other quaint fantasies and euphuistic devices of Lyly. Often the verse lapses into rhymed couplets and even stanza During the early stage he is conscious that each line should contain ten syllables and he carefully balances his verse. Later we find him taking liberties with the iambic pentameter line and all sorts of departures from the traditional form, short lines, irregular feet, hypermetrical syllables, all of which give the versification a delightful freedom of thought and fluency of verse. The liberties with the metre always indicate a later date.

1. Rhyme is a very early device of Shakespeare and reveals except in certain places where they are introduced for certain artistic purposes, the immaturity of the dramatist. The less rhyme there is in the play, the later is its date.

2. If there are a larger number of breaks in the middle of the lines, they indicate the later date of the play.

3. The fewer end stopped lines denote that the play belongs to a later date.

4. The more of weak and light endings there are, the later the date of the play. Because of the weak and light endings the vice cannot rest there but is hurried on to the next line and thus ensures for the verse a continuous flow. A blank verse used in a drama and the blank verse used in an epic are entirely different. A drama implies movement and life and so the medium of expressing adopted for it should be always capable of expressing even the subtlest change in the human mood. And this is exactly what Shakespeare has achieved in his blank verse in his later plays through this means.

In the early period we feel Shakespeare is writing with an effort. But in his later plays we notice a delightful flow of

verse, and they are marked with conciseness of expression, flexibility of medium, compressed metaphors, richness of imagery, and sonorous and musical quality of the verses.

The use of prose is another index of the chronology of Shakespeare's play. In the early plays where rhyme plays an important part we find little or no prose. In *Macbeth* the famous sleep-walking scene is completely in prose; Lady Macbeth because of the abnormality of her mind could not talk in verse, and the minor characters could not, therefore, be allowed to do so.

Thus all these tests of style and metre make us come to the conclusion that it is the last of the four great tragedies, *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth* and precedes the tragedies *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

All these pieces of internal evidence seem to establish beyond doubt that *Macbeth* must have been written about the year 1606 and they confirm the conclusion already arrived at through a detailed examination of external evidence.

Arguments in favour of a Later Date

External Evidence.—(1) Dr. Simon Forman, an astrologer and quack, saw *Macbeth* at the Globe Theatre on April 20, 1610, and gives in his diary a detailed account of the plot of the play. Some editors believe that this conclusively proves that the play was written in 1610. They argue that Dr. Simon Forman would not have given such an elaborate survey of *Macbeth* in his diary if it had not been something new, and they moreover add, that if the play had been produced earlier, it could not have continued on the stage for such a long time, and amidst the heavy rush of new plays there would have been very little possibility of the play being revived that year. But we cannot join these critics in their conclusion, because it is quite possible that the play had captivated the interest of the public for a longer time, or had been revived later in spite of the rush of new plays on account of its tremendous popularity. Again, because Dr. Simon Forman has given us a detailed analysis of the plot we cannot conclude that it must have come on the stage for the first time in 1610.

A diary will only give us a record of his private impressions on the play, but cannot be accepted as a positive evidence to fix the date of composition of the play as 1610.

(2) There is a supposed reference Banquo's Ghost in Beaumont and Fletcher's Knight of the Burning Pestle, published in 1611. They cite the passage.

> 'When thou art at the table with thy friends,
> Merry at heart and fill'd with swelling wine.
> I'll come in the midst of all thy pride and mirth
> Invisible to all men by thyself.'

But even if this conjecture is right it only proves that *Macbeth* was written earlier than Beaumont and Fletcher's work.

(3) Some believe that passage ' Here's a white hand, can blood so soon be washed ' in Webster's *Victoria Cerembona* is based on some passage in *Macbeth.*

Other Arguments.—(1) The Porter's speech cannot be taken as a conclusive evidence. The references are just to ordinary common incidents of the Elizabethan period. The attack on Jesuits, the comment on the thieving propensity of tailors, the mention of a plentiful harvest, might very easily refer to other incidents in other years.

(2) Too much stress cannot be put upon the accession of James I because the union of the English and Scottish crowns was an event of great interest to the public for several years.

Whatever the actual date of composition of *Macbeth* may be, it may be safely affirmed that the play must have been composed between the years 1604 and 1610. The reference to the coronation of James I makes the year 1604 as being a limit before which time 'the play cannot have been written. And Dr. Forman's diary establishes beyond doubt that the play cannot have been written later than 1610. But a date so late as that cannot be accepted because it would bring *Macbeth* into the group of Romances with which the play has nothing in common even if we view it from every angle.

IV. SHAKESPEARE'S CONCEPTION OF TRAGEDY

Shakespeare, it may be noticed at the very outset, never bothered with any theory of tragedy. What Shakespeare did—was to express his idea of life in his tragedies, representing its terror and mystery as he observed and contemplated. But from a close examination of his tragedies we can get at his view of the tragic fact.

Shakespearean tragedy presents a conflict between good and evil. Shakespearane tragedy is essentially a presentation of the conflict of good and evil. It brings us into the very roots of things, and confronts us with the deepest mystery of life. He never makes any attempt to solve the mystery, simply because the mystery is insoluble. "In the tragedies, Shakespeare has flung himself abroad upon the dim sea which moans around our little solid sphere of the known." He does not, like Milton, enquire into the origin of evil. He says that evil does exist—evil that is in perpetual conflict with good. Iago and Goneril and Regan exist in the human world; witches—supramundane creature,—fly about invisibly, kindling evil in human hearts. As against these forces of evil there exists good, that ultimately overthrows evil. Just as there is Iago, there is also Desdemona, whose innocent purity shines with ineffable radiance through all the dark machinations of the subtle Venetian. Shakespeare declares in emphatic terms that the world that can hold a Desdemona or a Cordelia is after all a beautiful world, and that all its ugliness is temporary phase which must pass away like mist before the morning sun.

Overthrow of a great soul. Shakespeare's tragedy is the story of the overthrow of a great soul brought about by its own error or crime. Circumstances also play an important part in bringing about the tragic end. The dramatist's business is therefore to show the action and interaction of character and circumstances. These two factors combine to produce the tragic issue.

The hero has one fatal weakness. The hero, other wise great and noble, has a fatal weakness, that drives him forward to his doom; he cannot escape, because the weakness

is a part of his character. There is, thus, something like inevitability in every tragedy of Shakespeare. Othello, made as he is—noble, magnanimous, and unsuspicious, but easily wrought to the extreme—would certainly act as he does in the pay. His action is a direct outcome of his character. No doubt the circumstances in which he is placed, influence his action considerably, but we are made to feel that the catastrophe follows inevitably from his deeds, and these deeds issue out of his character. Thus, the calamity that befalls the hero does not merely happen to him, but is the direct and inevitable consequence of his action He is a free agent and acts freely. If he were compelled by circumstances or fate to choose a certain course of action, he would not be responsible for his action, and the tragedy would lose its force and significance. Shakespeare always makes his hero a free agent, acting on his own responsibility. There may be certain factors influencing the hero, *viz.*, circumstances or supernatural forces, but they never exercise a compelling influence upon him The witches in *Macbeth* do not force Macbeth to commit murder : they merely express what lies dormant in his mind. Chance or accident is sometimes introduced in a tragedy, but it enters the dramatic sequence only when the action is well advanced. The dropping of the handkerchief in *Othello* is an instance in point. The most important factor in Shakespearean tragedy is therefore the actions of men, which are the direct outcome of their character.

The hero occupies a high position in life—he is often a king or a prince. The action in a tragedy centres round the character of the hero, who is a man in a high position—a king, a prince or a general. By making a king or a prince the hero of his tragedy, Shakespeare sought to impart dignity and solemnity to his story. It may be said that the anguish of remorse in a peasant is the same as that in a king. Perhaps ; but the latter has a dignity that moves the hearts of men more deeply. With the fortunes of a king are bound up the fortunes of millions ; and when he falls suddenly from his position of greatness, his fall produces a deep feeling of awe and terror in the hearts of men.

Two phases of conflict in Shakespearean tragedy. A

tragedy again is a story of conflict—conflict between two individuals, or two groups, or between two principles, passions or ideals, animating two groups. To one of these groups belongs the hero, and the hero is defeated in this conflict. This is what may be called the external conflict in a tragedy. In *Julius Caesar*, the cause represented by Brutus and Cassius is in conflict with that of Caesar. In *Macbeth*, the hero and heroine are opposed to those who stand for Duncan. But besides the outer conflict, there is another conflict—the inner conflict, which takes place in the hero's soul. And the inner conflict is infinitely more interesting than the outer one. Who cares for the fight between Macbeth and Macduff? That Macbeth will be defeated is a foregone conclusion. The defeat and death of Macbeth are nothing in comparison with the terrible punishment he has gone through. Shakespeare has laid bare before us his soul torn by inner conflict, and we know not whether to hate Macbeth or pity him.

Thus a Shakespearean tragedy is a story of conflict in which the hero belonging to a high position suffers by reason of a fatal weakness in his character and ultimately dies, the spectacle of his suffering arousing pity and terror in the hearts of the spectators. "His conception of tragedy was the ruin of a grave and noble nature through the existence of some serious, inherent weakness brought into contact with the special hostile circumstances calculated to defeat it."

V. THE HERO IN SHAKESPEAREAN TRAGEDY.

The hero is the central figure of a tragedy. It is his action that leads to the tragic catastrophe. It is he who suffers, and it is his suffering that makes the tragedy. Hence to understand the nature of Shakespearean tragedy, we must have an accurate conception of the hero's character.

The heroes are men of exceptional character. The heroes of Shakespeare's tragedy have certain common qualities, which seem to be essential to the tragic effect. All his heroes are men of high nobility, they are all men of exceptional character. They live intensely, and are built on a

grand scale. They are human, all of them, but their human qualities are magnified. Their capacities of thought, passion and desire seem almost to touch the verge of the infinite. But with all their grandeur and magnificence, they have a fatal weakness in their character, which leads to tragedy. Each of these heroes has a marked predisposition, which may be called the tragic trait. This trait becomes fatal to him in the circumstances in which he is placed. Shakespeare never represents a faultless hero ruined merely by external forces; character and circumstances always act and react upone ach other in Shakespearean tragedy. "Shakespeare's tragedies are not mere tragedies of character. Character may be, as some critics have asserted, destiny for him, as for Novalis, but that is only part of the truth. Shakespeare's conception of tragedy involved, over and above character, the suggestion of fatal forces operating on the actions of mankind, placing these men of power, nobility, strength and courage in just those situations with which they are incapable of dealing." Hamlet and Othello have certain weaknesses, which by themselves are not of a serious nature; but they become fatal only in the circumstances in which they are placed. If Hamlet and Othello were to change places, there would be no tragedy in either case.

Macbeth as Hero. It may be asked—why should the suffering of an erring or a criminal hero produce tragic emotion—*i.e.*, pity and terror? Shakespeare has therefore made his heroes noble, great and magnificent. When we see such a man, so good and so noble, suffering by reason of some error or weakness, which he cannot avoid, our hearts are filled with pity and terror. But Macbeth is a villain—his suffering at least need not arouse tragic emotion. Here is indeed a difficulty, but Shakespeare overcomes it by giving to Macbeth a conscience, "so terrifying in its warnings and so maddening in its reproaches," that the sight of his mental torture makes us pity the man, though we condemn the crime.

"The tragic hero with Shakespeare need not be good, though generally he is good, and therefore at once wins sympathy in his error. But it is necessary that he should have so

much greatness that in his error and fall we may be vividly conscious of the possibility of human nature".—*Bradley.*

VI. THE VILLAIN AS HERO IN MACBETH—DIFFICULTY OF THE THEME OF MACBETH

Macbeth—an intimate drama of the soul. The story of *Macbeth* in bare outline is a tale of villainy. "A Scottish nobleman and general receives under his roof in treacherous hospitality his aged monarch to whom he is bound not only by blood and loyalty but by innumerable tokens of love and high honours recently conferred, and slays him with own hands in order to usurp his throne, and then to secure his throne, resorts to such massacre of men, women and children as drives his subjects to rebellion and involves his country in civil war." This outline of the external action of *Macbeth* may be said to be the least part of the play. The real drama is the intimate drama of the soul and it is there that we find the awful tragedy that *Macbeth* is.

Macbeth—both a hero and villain. That Macbeth kills his king under his roof and violates the accepted standard of morality is true. If Macbeth were only a murderer and nothing more, he would be a mere stagevillain, and not the hero of a great tragedy. Shakespeare's triumph in *Macbeth* is that he represents the villainy of the hero and the heroine in all its enormity, and still enlists the sympathy of the audience for this criminal pair. How does he do so? If the hero were a mere villain and aroused nothing but loathing and disgust, the play would not be a tragedy. Let us see how the dramatist makes the audience feel pity for the hero who is an assassin, usurper and tyrant.

Five devices employed for the purpose : (*i*) the use of the supernatural. (1) The first device employed by Shakespeare to enlist our sympathy for the hero is the introduction of the supernatural, which has the effect of lifting the crime to a plane higher than that of everyday existence. "We feel that we are not in the presence of the simple murder of a king but in that of a cosmic tragedy, which, although it has realistic features, cannot be related to our ordinary life."

The witches pervade the drama from the beginning to the end; they appear in the first scene in thunder, rain and lightning; and their invisible presence is felt, to the last, when Macbeth curses "the juggling fiends that palter with us in a double sense." We are made to feel that the witches are the evil forces in the tragedy and that Macbeth is simply a tool in their hands. But Macbeth is properly speaking not a tool; he has perfect freedom of action, and acts upon his own responsibility. But the mere fact that he is brought face to face with the powers of evil—with an awful Force, which he cannot resist, makes us pity the helpless victim.

> Why do I yield to that suggestion,
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And makes my seated heart knock at my ribs
> Against the use of my nature?

Macbeth is tempted by the witches. Yes, why does he yield? He may be ambitious—he may have conceived criminal designs before; but he never yielded before. Why does he yield now? Is it because of the subtle supernatural soliciting? In any case "this is the moment of the birth of evil in Macbeth—now for the first time he feels its oncoming reality." He is not only frightened, but he is paralysed, mesmerised, as though in a dream. "He is helpless as a man in a nightmare, he may struggle but cannot fight; he can no more resist than a rabbit resists a weasel'e teeth fastened in its neck, or a bird the serpent's transfixing eye".

(ii) **Circumstances goad him on.** Secondly, circumstances seem to goad him on, it appears as though there is no escape for him. While Macbeth struggles under the g ip of the witches, comes the proclamation of Malcolm as heir-apparent: Macbeth has thus no chance of a peaceful succession to the throne of Scotland Immediately the king expresses his intention to become Macbeth's guest. Circumstances thus urge Macbeth to do what the witches had mysteriously suggested. It looks as though the forces of evil were not content merely with suggesting, but also tempted him by creating favourable circumstances Still Macbeth's better nature is against the deed of murder. He is essentially a man of noble character, brave, fearless and honoured by all. The thought

of the crime appals him and unfixes his hair. His famous soliloquy (*If it were done, when it is done............*) shows that he is fully conscious of his guilt. He is no born child of darkness; even when the crime has been decided, he would withdraw:

We will proceed no further in this business.

He realises the whole horror of the crime even before he commits it. And after it, his soul is torn by such anguish that we feel a definite sympathy for him, even when we condemn his action.

(*iii*) **The Fourth Witch?** As if the use of the supernatural agents, and Macbeth's own anguish were not enough to enlist our sympathy for Macbeth, Shakespeare introduces Lady Macbeth. She has been called the Fourth Witch because she brings all her power of will and ruthless determination to induce Macbeth to do the deed that the Witches had mysteriously suggested. Without such a spur to the sides of his intent, such a man as Macbeth could never have steeled himself to the task, which fills his soul with abhorrence and repugnance. Macbeth is about to give it over, when Lady Macbeth appears and taunts him with cowardice. We feel as though supernatural and natural forces seem to conspire against Macbeth, who, noble as he might be, cannot withstand all these concentrated forces.

(*iv*) **The introduction of Banquo.** In order to show the power of the witches and lessen in us the impression of Macbeth's guilt, Shakespeare has introduced the character of Banquo. When Banquo first appears he is a wholly noble person, and has never toyed with evil thoughts before. But after his meeting with the witches, he does not remain untainted. His words, before Macbeth's crime, show that he is an altered man; he has suspicions, but he never tells anybody; just a hint, and Duncan would be saved. After Duncan's murder, he does not do anything to punish the murderer; he offers his homage to the new king, though he knows that Macbeth "played most foully" for the crown. He keeps the guilty secret and lays to his heart a guilty hope:

...........it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,

> But that myself should be the root and father
> Of many kings.

Before the night is over, Banquo lies murdered. Thus even Banquo, the honest man, falls a victim to the witches (who represent mighty forces of evil), and pays a heavy penalty. Our belief in the power of the witches is strengthened, and we feel pity and sympathy for Macbeth, who falls into the toils of these inexorable, ruthless beings. Macbeth is like the fly caught in the web of a spider, and we have full sympathy for the helpless fly.

(*v*) **The suffering of Macbeth arouses pity and terror.** Lastly, both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth suffer tremendously for the crime they have committed. The sight of their anguish, the terrible punishment which their own conscience inflicts upon them, the frustration of all their hopes, the utter futility of their lives after the crime, and finally the total shattering of their entire being creates a sense of terror in our minds, and notwithstanding their crime, we feel pity for the guilty pair. The emotions of terror and pity—the two emotions that Aristotle regards as *sin qua non* of tragedy—are aroused in the minds of the spectators by the fates of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Macbeth the villain is a true tragic hero.

VII. NATURE OR SOURCE OF THE TRAGEDY IN MACBETH

Tragedy springs from Macbeth's weakness. "Give a brave, noble, ambitious general with every good quality but with the fatal feeling of inordinate ambition. Let us suppose, that his ambition is stimulated by supernatural predictions, and that he is urged to crime by a determined wife, what is likely to happen?" The tragedy of *Macbeth* is the answer to the problem. The one failing of Macbeth, viz., his ambition in the circumstances in which he is placed, proves fatal to him. It is the irony of fate that he finds himself faced with circumstances which demand the very quality which he lacks—viz., a strong will. If he had a powerful will to withstand the 'soliciting of the witches and the urging of his wife, there would be no tragedy at all.' *The tragedy in* Macbeth *therefore arises out of the weakness of Macbeth—his ambition and his lack*

of strong will. But destiny also plays its part. Not only is Macbeth tempted by the witches and urged by his wife, but there are other factors which drive him on to the crime. The nomination of Malcolm removes his chance of peaceful succession; the unexpected visit of Duncan provides the suitable opportunity: and the precautionary steps taken by his wife reassure him in respect of the possible risk of detection. Circumstances thus seem to drive him on. Though Macbeth's nature revolts at the very thought of murder, yet he is driven to it by the pressure of circumstances. Heaven and earth seem to conspire against him, and he himself has not got sufficient will power to withstand the concentrated onset of natural and supernatural forces. Thus Macbeth's own character and the forces of destiny combine to bring about his ruin.

Macbeth is a tragic figure. But the tragedy of *Macbeth* is not merely the story of Macbeth's crime followed by his death. If it were merely that, it would not be a *tragedy*. If Macbeth were a mere murderer and tyrant, his story would not evoke any tragic emotion. When a man commits murder he is looked upon with abhorrence and disgust, and his destruction is desired by all. But this desire for the destruction of a criminal and its satisfaction are not tragic emotions. Macbeth is much more than a criminal and murderer. We admire him and even feel sympathy for him; we are, in fact, filled with awe at the spectacle of his inward torment. These feelings of pity and awe are tragic emotions, and because Macbeth arouses them, he is a tragic figure, and his story a tragedy. How does Shakespeare make the spectators sympathise with Macbeth, who is after all an assassin, usurper and tyrant? "Two things", says Boyer, "are necessary to arouse tragic emotions when a villain is the hero in a play; the hero must have so much greatness in his character as to call forth our admiration and make us conscious of the possibilities of human nature; and there must be an internal struggle represented."

Struggle in Macbeth's mind before the crime. The tragedy of *Macbeth* lies for the most part in the inward struggle of the hero before the crime and the terrible punishment which both the hero and the heroine suffer after the crime,

Macbeth is no doubt ambitious ; in fact, ambition is his dominating passion. But the course of action suggested by it is abhorrent to his better nature. His imagination, which has been described as his pictorial conscience, calls up horrid pictures at the very thought of murder ; frightens him by presenting the image of a dagger marked with gouts of blood. His famous soliloquy clearly shows his horror of murder. Even when the thing is arranged, he would withdraw. But his wife taunts him with cowardice, accuses him of fickleness, and uses all her power to overcome his scruples. The deed is done without enthusiasm—almost reluctantly. And then Macbeth is almost mad with horror. Again his imagination is at work —he seems to hear a voice—the inner voice of his conscience : " Macbeth doth murder sleep—Macbeth shall sleep no more." Do we not feel that this man has been forced to commit a crime, against which his whole nature revolted ? Then after he becomes king, he does not enjoy a moment's peace of mind. He commits more and more crimes in order to make himself secure, but the more deeply he plunges in blood, the more miserable he feels. He realises the futility of his crime, and the consciousness of guilt " keeps him in perpetual agony of restlessness." His mind is full of scorpions, and he cannot sleep. His soul is withered and scorched, his whole being goes to pieces. So when death comes, it comes as a relief to him. This terrible spectacle of the ruin of a man's soul makes us stand aghast with awe, and we feel pity for Macbeth, though we condemn his crime.

Lady Macbeth's strength overcomes Macbeth's vacillation. The fate of the heroine is not less—perhaps more heart-rending—than that of the hero. Lady Macbeth is as ambitious as her husband, but her ambition is for the sake of her husband ; she wants to see him seated on the throne of Scotland. Macbeth had previously talked to her about removing Duncan and seizing the crown ; but then there was no opportunity. Now when Duncan himself visits the castle, why should her husband, who can distract himself by ceaseless action. But she never betrays her suffering ; her strong will suppresses it. But what remains hidden in the day manifests itself in the disorders of sleep. The sleep-walking scene tells us, as nothing else can, what terrible agnoy she has been enduring

since the fateful night. It reveals the inmost depth of the queen's soul. The tragedy of *Macbeth* is not so much the story of a crime, as the spiritual history of two unfortunate persons, who suffer such inward torment for their crime that we cannot help feeling pity for them. The gentlewoman expresses what every spectator feels, "I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity of the whole body." This is what Aristotle calls the purging of emotions through pity and terror.

VIII. THE CONSTRUCTION OF MACBETH

In the early period of Shakespeare's dramatic career it may be noticed that his plot is always far behind his characterisation. He at this time had not acquired the art of constructing up to his character level. As Prof. Saintsbury remarks: 'Shakespeare at this time was certainly not our best plotter; he was already at times an almost perfect artist in character, as he was a quite perfect poet'. In the second period of his dramatic career Shakespeare's construction and dramatic conception have reached a higher artistic level, and by the time he comes to his great tragedies we find his plot and character going hand in hand together and blended in artistic harmony. Shakespeare seldom formed a plot clearer, more coherent, more connected and harmonius than *Macbeth*. The outline of the play is carefully worked and the exposition most brief but lucid and clear.

The play of *Macbeth* falls naturally into two parts, the first one dealing with the rise of Macbeth, his early victories, temptation, deed, and the crowning of his ambition, and the second one dealing with his ruin and destruction, the murder of Banquo, the slaughter of Macduff's family, the battle of Dunsinane, and death. The rise of Macbeth does not cease with the murder of Duncan and the seizure of the throne He still continues to grow till the crisis is reached with the murder of Banquo. As in his other plays the crisis of the play falls about the middle of the Third Act. Then comes a long series of disappointments and failures one after another. Disaster first sets in with the escape of Fleance from the clutches of the murderers. The slaughter of Macduff's family

instead of strengthening his position only weakens it. He consults the witches and clothes himself in a false sense of security only to be disillusioned later. Birnam wood actually moves to Dunsinane, Macduff is of no woman born, and finally we have 'the return of the deed upon the doer'. Thus the play 'is remarkable for its symmetry ; the rise and fall of Macbeth constituting as it were, the arch of a bridge with its keystone in the centre'.

The First Act is in the nature of exposition and deals with the victories and temptations of Macbeth. The first scene opens on a deserted heath, with three witches, who have assembled there to meet Macbeth, the thane of Glamis, when returning from the field of battle. Macbeth and Banquo meet the witches on the heath : Macbeth visibly starts at the prediction that he will be thane of Cawdor, and later king of Scotland, and Banquo is surprised. A little later Ross arrives on the scene and the previous prediction is confirmed. Thus the seed of temptation takes its root in a soil quite congenial for its growth. In the fourth scene a 'major obstacle' rises before Macbeth, when the king announces his intention of making Malcolm his successor and bestows on him the title of the Prince of Cumberland. This only fans the fire of desire in Macbeth's heart and impatienly exclaims

> "The Prince of Cumberland ! that a step
> On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
> For in my way it lies".

The seed of temptation which has already begun to sprout receives the necessary warmth from Lady Macbeth in the fifth scene. She points out to him that the opportunity has been already created for him by kind fate for the accomplishment of his desire. By the close of the seventh in the First Act the temptation of Macbeth is complete. All obstacles are overcome and every moral scruple set aside. There is before Macbeth's vision only his ambition and the realisation of it.

After a great deal of hesitation, a tremendous conflict between the good and evil in Macbeth's soul, the iron will of Lady Macbeth and the weaker nature of her husband, the deed is done. The actual killing of Duncan is done in the second scene of the Second Act. Macbeth is almost distracted

with dread after the crime and Lady Macbeth has to nerve herself to the scene of tragedy and leave the daggers there. The porter scene affords the necessary relief and diversion after the rushing awiftness of events. The latter part of the scene is taken up with the discovery of the deed. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth act their allotted parts very well, and the lords adjourn with a promise to meet later to enquire into the bloody crime. Malcolm understands the fact in a flash and decides to flee from Scotland. Scene 3 provides the picturesque background necessary for such guilt ; the conversation between Ross and the Old Man reveals how there is disturbace in very Nature.

'The heavens, as troubled with man's act,
'Threatens his bloody stage : by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp.'

Again 'A falcon towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawed and kill'd'.

Macbeth continues to grow till the middle of the Third Act. He sinks deeper in crime, and there is a steady decline in his character. He is suspicious of his nobles, especially Banquo, and schemes to have both Banquo and his son Fleance removed. Thus one crime leads on to another till now with visible success for Macbeth. But with the escape of Fleance, the whole show fails. Banquo's ghost appears on the banquet scene and Macbeth is sane and mad by turns, and he is saved from suspicion only by the cool presence of mind of Lady Macbeth and his own brilliant rally later in the scene. The fifth scene reveals the witches and their goddess Hecate at their mysterious rites and it enhances the atmosphere of gloom and desolation and dread, that surrounds the whole play. The last scene of the Act serves to show Macbeth steadily lose ground, how suspicions have been aroused, and how counter-forces are already at work threatening the doom of the usurper.

The Fourth Act and the Fifth deal with the steady decline and downfall of Macbeth. His conference with the witches gives him hope only to be plunged again in despair. He shuts himself up till the last moment in the castle trusting implicitly

the words of the witches. He hears of the death of Lady Macbeth, takes it calmly to all outward appearances. But his interest in life has ceased The throne and the crown are no more fascinating to him. He dies in a spirit of fatalism : 'Life is but a walking shadow' for him.

Thus the plot of the play is admirably managed, the first part concerning itself with the rise of Macbeth, and the second with his fall. Even if we take the two halves separately, the same progression and arrangement, the same artistic balance the rise and fall, the crime and the punishment, can be traced. Prof. Moulton has given a masterly analysis of the construction of the play in two separate halves. 'But this is not all : not only is the play as a whole an example of Nemesis, but if its two halves be taken separately, they will be found to constitute a Neméśis complete in itself.' Macbeth's rise does not stop with Duncan's murder ; his attempt on Banquo is attended only with partial success, and that reveals his former crimes. This additional deed of blood brings not only its own punishment in the form of mental agonies and Banquo's ghost, whether real or imaginary, but also the unmasking of the previous crimes. "Thus the first half of the play, that which traces the rise of Macbeth, is a complete Nemesis Action—a career of sins in which the last sin secures the punishment of all".

The attempt on the life of Macduff and the slaughter of his family, in the second half of the play, bring in their wake the inevitable punishment. Macduff when he finally slays Macbeth is not only saving Scotland from the clutches of the tyrant, but also is having his personal revenge Thus Macduff and Banquo balance each other in the play. What Macduff is to the first half of the play, is Banquo to its second half.

Moulton, again, finds in the play three forms of action existing side by side. The career of Macbeth is an example of Nemesis : 'the rise is a crime of which the fall is the retribution.' The Oracular action also is a very important element in the plot of *Macbeth*. In the first part of the play we have the oracle of the witches and its fulfilment. The witches predict that Macbeth will be king and the prediction comes true. In the fall of Macbeth also there is the fulfilment of the

Oracular Action. He shall fall only when Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane, and the Birnam wood does move. He shall not be killed by any man born of woman, but Macduff is not born of woman; he is ripped open from his mother's womb. Along with these two elements could also be seen the element of Irony. In the early part of the play the witches promise Macbeth the crown. But obstacles one after another rise in his way; they, however, are surmounted and even help him to fix himself more securely on the throne The security promised by the Apparition has one drawback; 'beware Macduff' and this finally is the cause of his undoing. The life of Macbeth taken as whole is animated by the same spirit of Irony. Banquo was to be 'lesser than Macbeth. and yet greater'. It is only this that tempts him to do away with Banquo, thus unmasking all the crimes he had previously committed.

Macbeth is the shortest of Shakespeare's plays, except *The Comedy of Errors*. The brevity of the play is mostly owing to the simplicity of its plot, but that does not matter; it goes all to Macbeth's credit. The half of artistry consists in learning to make one stroke better than two. The more simply, economically, you produce the impression aimed at, the better workman you may call yourself.

Shakespeare in his *Macbeth* had to face a great difficulty. Macbeth is a cold-blooded murderer wallowing in crime just for the furtherance of his own ambitions. An innocent old king is murdered for the sake of the crown A friend and co-general in the battlefield is ruthlessly and treacherously cut down to keep the crown more secure. A whole family is savagely slaughtered and cut to pieces only to satisfy his anger and malice. Still, Shakespeare has to raise the sympathy of the audience for such a villain. All rules of drama demand it. The hero of tragic drama, whatever else he may miss, should engage our sympathy. Shakespeare tries all the usual practices. He makes Macbeth the brave general, 'valour's minion' and 'Bellona's bridegroom.' But that does not make his offence anytheless. He stresses on his devotion to Lady Macbeth. But that also does not help him much. 'He was a murderer, and a murderer for his private profit......a combination which does not appeal to most of us to unlock the flood gates

of sympathy.' In fact Shakespeare does not allow one loophole for pardon. Instead of lessening the crime of the hero he only doubles and triples it. 'The more we study Shakespeare, the more we have to admire him for the audacity with which he has plunged deeper and deeper the hero in crime.'

How could Shakespeare make his audience sympathise with such a man ? How could Shakespeare make his audience view leniently his guilt ? As Sir Arthur Quiller-Coach points out, 'There is only one possible way. It is to make our hero...... supposed great, supposed brave, supposed of certain winning natural gifts, proceed to his crime under some fatal hallucination. It must not be an hallucination of mere madness : for the merely revots. Further, such an hallucination once established upon a strong mind, the more forcibly that mind reasons the more desperate will be the conclusion of its error, the more powerful is the will, or combination of wills, the more irreparable will be the deed to which it drives, as with the more anguish we shall follow the once-noble soul step by step to its ruin.'

One striking feature of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is its witch scenes. The majority of Shakespeare's critics have attempted to belittle Shakespeare's introduction of the supernatural in Macbeth. The artist's mind was inevitably seized by the suggestion of witches in Holinshed's chronicle, and he attempts to manage it in such a way that it supplies the need of a drama of crime and Nemesis. The witches are not mere superfluous ornaments, but have been brought into marked connection with the play. Among certain contemporaries of Shakespeare witches are often foisted into the drama for the sake of entertainment, because the public needed this stimulus to inspire their wonder and awe ; but in Shakespeare witches have a definite place in the play inasmuch as they serve to heighten the atmosphere of gloom. The play opens with them amidst thunder and lightning and the scene strikes the keynote of the play. Standing in the midst of these filthy bearded hags everyone's thought would naturally turn to death and desolation. The witches prepare us for the crimes that are going to be perpetrated one after another right before

our eyes. Thus the witch scenes are woven into the texture of the play and they heighten its artistic harmony.

The action of the play is well compact. 'A rushing swiftness' characterises all the events, but there is nothing disjointed and disconnected about them. Whether we take the play as a whole, or in separate halves, the drama is extremely well-balanced. The witches are not mere superfluous ornaments, but are brought into intimate connection with the play. Every tiny detail, every single character, contributes some effect or other, so that the final impression that we get is one of harmony and clearness. The dramatic theme is the rise and fall of Macbeth and the play is Shakespeare's nearest approach to the classical model. 'Through all the separate interests of this elaborate plot, the three forms of action, Nemesis, the Oracular, Irony......are seen perfectly harmonised and perfectly complete. And over all this is thrown the supernatural interest of the witches, who are agents of nemesis working by the means or ironical oracles.

IX. SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF THE SUPER-NATURAL IN MACBETH

Professor Allardyce Nicoll says that the purpose of introducing supernatural elements in a drama is to make it universal in application. To quote his own words: "By this means (that is, by using the supernatural elements) an otherwise 'sordid' story of murder and revenge has been carried to higher levels, and assumes at once a peculiar significance of its own." It will be found that the play of *Macbeth* is nothing more than a melodrama or a detective story of blood and thunder, if we consider only the murders and supernal manifestations that are to be found in it. In fact we go a step further and plausibly maintain that all the tragedies of Shakespeare are nothing more than sensational melodramas of blood and thunder. But if we study closely we will not fail to see that these very sensational dramas have been turned into rich poetry by art and genius of Shakespeare. Many things have contributed to this imaginative transformation of crude and sensational dramatic material, but none of them is so influential and decisive as the introduction of a sense of supernatural

interference in human affairs, which the tragedies represent on the stage. Briefly, we will classify the different forms of the supernatural in a Shakespearean tragedy into four divisions, namely, Ghosts and Witches, Fate, Tragic Irony and Pathetic Fallacy. It will be seen that this classification will provide us with a wider conception of the supernatural element in a Shakespearean tragedy, and against the background of such a conception we will study the interpretation of the plays.

(i) Ghosts and Witches

Belief in Ghosts and other supernatural visitants has considerably been toned down in our own day, what with our objective approach to the problems of life, the scientific rendering of facts and the rationalising tendency of the modern mind. But in the Elizabethan Age people had a strong belief in ghosts and spirits and their dramatists naturally exploited this fruitful credulity on the part of their audience. Many of the plays of that period represent ghosts on the stage, sometimes crudely and at other times with a finer touch of imagination. Shakespeare's concessions to the public tastes of his age are proverbial, and we know that he did not hesitate to exploit tradition to its fullest extent. Hence he also introduces ghosts into his tragedies ; but, however, with a difference, the ghosts introduced by other playwrights of the Elizabethan era were crude, less imaginatively handled and were represented as altogether outside elements, having no integral relation to the characters in the play. Their only purpose lay in exciting sensation and thrill in the credulous minds of the audience. But in the hands of Shakespeare the ghost, like everything he touched, 'undergoes a sea-change and is transformed into something rich and strange. In his subtle handling of ghosts Shakespeare makes them suggestive of vast and unknown forces outside the range of human experience.

Let us take some examples : In the play of *Hamlet* we meet with the spirit of Hamlet's murdered father, fully dressed up in the 'habit as he was.' It is a bodily presentation of the father's ghost, and as such it has its requisite influence in thrilling the minds of the audience. However, we must note

that Shakespeare is not satisfied by the merely physical presentation of the ghost. To him the significance of the ghost lies in the suggestion of realms from whose bound no traveller returns. And further we should note that this ghost is presented as intimately related to the thoughts and feelings of the hero himself. Thus the ghost is an integral part of the tragedy, and not, as in lesser dramatists, merely an outside agent altogether unrelated to the principal characters in the play.

But we must not commit mistake of imagining that Shakespeare himself believed in ghosts and spirits and that he used them for the purpose of showing their interference with and influence on the dramatic characters. Shakespeare does nothing of the sort, and this is his peculiar use of the supernatural element in his plays. We know that the ghost in *Hamlet* tells Prince Hamlet that his father was murdered. But we should hasten to remark that Prince Hamlet does not entirely depend upon the words of the ghost regarding the fact of murder. Before he meets the ghost the young prince has already had his suspicion about some foul play in connection with the death of his royal father The words of the ghost only confirm his earlier suspicions and that is why he says "O, my prophetic soul", when he hears from the ghost the fact of the murder, all which simply goes to prove that Shakespeare introduces ghosts and supernatural agents as the symbols of subconscious divination on the part of the dramatic characters themselves. In other words the supernatural agents only confirm what has already been divined, although half-consciously, by the characters themselves. Thus while we are subtly aware of dim, distant suggestions of some unknown realm outside the range of average human experience, we are nevertheless equally aware of the fact that human affairs are not interfered with nor influenced by these supernatural agencies. Their existence is a debatable point and that the plays of Shakespeare never grow old. They appeal to the most modern of audiences because of this universality which they possess. If Shakespeare had made the supernatural agencies directly influencing human affairs the modern mind with its rationalising and scientific attitude could not have appreciated such an other-worldly influence. The greatness of Shakespeare consists in his extraordinary commonsense

which compelled him to give the devil its due no doubt, but having given it he remained absolutely free to handle dramatic life according to natural laws and principles. Though the supernatural is given its due share (for there are always those who yet believe in such phenomena) it is the natural life of mankind that Shakespeare portrays in his plays.

Further we should also note that Shakespeare tries his best to tone down the crudeness and incredibility of the supernatural agencies so that no audience, however modern and ralation, will have any cause to grudge or be aesthetically offended by such introduction of the supernatural elements. For we know that the ghosts and such other supernatural visitants have at best a debatable and doubtful reality as represented on the stage. Even in the play of *Hamlet*, where the ghost of Hamlet's father is bodily introduced, we are made to doubt as to its actual existence. Not all the characters in the play equally see it or believe in it. The mother of Hamlet, for instance, never for a moment believes in the appearance of her murdered husband, but on the other hand she stoutly maintains that it is her son's fevered imagination which is responsible for creating the ghost! And further, even though the ghost is made to speak, it speaks only to Prince Hamlet. In fact his best and most intimate friend, Horatio, is inclined to be incredulous about it This is the characteristic Shakespearean touch of artistic suggestiveness when he handles the supernatural elements in his plays.

It is so in all the tragedies of Shakespeare wherever the supernatural has been introduced In the play of *Macbeth* itself we see the same subtle and indefinable, although undoubted influence of the ghost of Banquo. That is one reason why critics are at loggerheads in discussing this point in the tragedy of *Macbeth*. As usual, some critics admit the presence of Banquo's ghost on the stage, while others argue it out of existence altogether. But few realise that the ghost of Banquo is a fact for Macbeth himself who alone sees it. And this is as it should be, because as usual with Shakespeare, the supernatural is intended to be related intimately with some tragic character and not with all in general. Therefore Macbeth sees it as surely as he sees the imaginary dagger in the

murder-scene. Both these forms of the supernatural are mere objectifications of his own feverish brain and guilty conscience.

And so it is again with the witches in the play of *Macbeth*. These weird sisters three are seen to be intimately connected with the personality of Macbeth, the principal tragic figure in the drama. Witches, of course, were believed in by the Elizabethan audience and even as late as the eighteenth century they were not altogether driven off people's minds. But that is not the point here. Shakespeare never asks us to believe or to disbelieve in the reality of witches. All that he does is that he exploits the purpose of dramatic art and the traditional belief in witchcraft. Hence the witches in *Macbeth* are made to fall in line with the inner life of its hero. This we are made to realise by the words of Macbeth himself. When Macbeth enters on the stage his first words are :

"So foul and fair a day I have not seen."

This is, as we know, before he even meets the witches. And we now realise the relation of these witches with the thoughts and emotions of Macbeth when we recollect that the words of these are almost the echoes of Macbeth's own words. All the three weird sisters say in the opening scene of the play

"Fair is foul and foul is fair
Hover through the fog and filthy air."

This intimate connection between the supernatural and the personality of the tragic hero is a characteristic of Shakespeare's use of the same in his plays. It is only in relation to the personality of some principal character that the supernatural agents are introduced. Their existence, in other words, is only relative, not absolute. Of this we are convinced when we examine the reaction of other characters of the play when they meet these weird agents.

In the same scene as above both Macbeth and Banquo enter on the stage when they meet the witches. Macbeth's words, we already know, are almost a verbal echo of those of three weird sisters. But the response and reaction of Banquo, who is also there, are not the same as those of Macbeth. This proves that the supernatural is not true for all characters in the play. This is what Banquo says when he meets the witches

with Macbeth :

" what are these
They look not like the inhabitants of the earth.
And yet are on it..............
You should be women.
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so."

This is the candid reaction of a just, honest and good character of the play. To an innocent, unsophisticated mind like that of Banquo, the witches have no value except as strange, unnatural objects. And his words further on point to the same conclusion when he asks : when the witches have vanished from their sight.

" Were such things here as we do speak about ?
Or have we eaten of the insane root
That takes the reason prisoner ?

But for all this incredulity of Banquo, so far as Macbeth is concerned, the witches have a real significance. They are externalised forms of the inner mood of his own. And that is why Macbeth, like a guilty man surprised, stands 'rapt withal', as Banquo says. Macbeth stands so because he is afraid that his inner thoughts (of kingship and murder) have now been revealed by the witches.

In short we will do well to repeat what a great critic of Shakespearean drama has told us. " These witches, therefore", says the learned critic : " are in part corporeal, in part supernatural, in part the personified temptations of Macbeth himself. There is the sense that we are in touch with infinite, indefinable, and intangible forces of the universe ; and yet there remains a doubt. *The subtlety of Shakespeare disarms our preconception, whether that preconception be of belief or disbelief*" (*in the existence of the supernatural agencies*).

The italics are ours and in those words we get the real meaning and significance of the use of the supernatural as presented on the stage in all Shakespearean tragedies. Professor Moulton wisely remarks that we should beware of being wiser than the plays we read or witness. " We do not believe in witchcraft ", he says, " Shakespeare's age did. Accordingly we

often see attempts to explain away the supernatural character of this element in the play ; the suggestion that the witches are hallucinations of Macbeth, or symbols of the power of temptation. If, however, we follow the evidence of the scenes, it is abundantly clear that those witches are objective figures, seen at their work of witchcraft in places where there is no Macbeth present to permit of hallucination ; they are represented as possessing supernatural power, and can vanish like bubbles into air............ It is a scientific error—error in the scienee of interpretation—where the interpreter insists on being wiser than the literature he is to interpret."

(*ii*) The Idea of Fate

The second form under which the supernatural is represented in a Shakespearean drama is that of Fate. The broadest definition of Fate is that it is assumed to baffle human efforts. Anything that iterferes with or deliberately perverts the schemes of mankind is classified under the word 'fate'. In tragedy this sense of fate is seen in its crippling the hero who represents the good principle in life. Such a conception of fate is largely held by the Indian way of looking at life. We are said to be fatalists in the sense that we ascribe human failures and frustrations to some unknown and invincible power outside the control of human beings. Shakespeare, however, does not indicate that he believes in such an idea of fate. What Shakespeare does is to present two aspects of the supernatural which may be defined as chance and fate. So far as chance or luck is concerned there is not any definite implication of a supernatural agency at all. It happened by chance, as we say. There is just a faint hint at something incalculable in human affairs which we infer from the introduction of chance or luck. But with fate it is different. The idea of a deliberate power outside human control which we know by the name of fate is very rarely used by Shakespeare. As critics have often pointed out, it is only in one play of Shakespeare that such an idea of fate is represented. In *Romeo and Juliet* we are told that the young lovers were "ill-starred". The belief in the directive influence of the stars above, no doubt, appears in some of Shakespeare's characters in his later plays, as for example, in *King*

Lear where Kent says:

> "It is the stars,
> The stars above us, govern our conditions"

But we must hasten to add that there are other characters who equally deny any such outside interference in human affairs. In *Othello*, for instance, we find Iago who says:

> "It is in ourselves that we are thus and thus."

And we may note further that Edmund in *King Lear* definitely denies any belief in fate or the stars. His words are worth remembering:

"This is the excellent foppery of the world" he says: "that when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeit of our own behaviour—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterous by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a Divine thrusting on; an admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star!"

This is an excellent criticism of the belief in fate or in stars and we are not sure that Shakespeare is not hiding himself behind Edmund's mask while saying all this. Anyway we should note that Shakespeare does not use the idea of fate as directly shaping human events except in his one earlier tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet.* In all his mature tragedies, Professor Allardyce Nicoll has admirably pointed out, it is chance or luck that brings about the tragedy, and neither fate nor stars. In the words of the learned Professor, "It was a *chance* that led to Hamlet's boarding the pirate ship; it was *chance* that made Duncan come to Macbeth; it was *chance* that brought Bianca in with the handkerchief when Othello was eavesdropping. Fate, direct fate, occurs only in the one early play." In other words, although Shakespeare uses the sense of an outside agency as shaping in some way human affairs he rarely, if ever, makes fate the decisive dramatic motive to the action of his tragedies. As usual with him he always

keeps neutral, neither affirming nor denying the place of fate as such.

(*iii*) Tragic Irony

The third form in which the influence of the supernatural is hinted at in a Shakespearian tragedy is that of tragic irony. But irony we mean a figure of speech in which the speaker says one thing and means another. In fact the figure of speech employed in irony states the opposite of what it intends to mean. The dramatic use of irony is, however, different. By tragic irony we mean the happening of things which adversely affects the characters. If for example, a character in a play says that a certain action is going to take a particular course, the translation of this action into the opposite of what the character expected is said to be the result of tragic irony. Now it is clear that in such a use of tragic irony there is an appreciable suggestion that there are certain powers outside human experience that effect such frustrations. It is the practice of Shakespeare to use dramatic irony but sparingly. He does not use a form of irony which definitely presupposes the existence of supernatural agencies frustrating natural agents.

No doubt the characters in a Shakespearian drama do talk of fate and the stars above and so forth, but it should be noted that all such references to fate are given as hearsay and rumours. That is to say, no character is represented as being an eye witness of such happenings as are ascribed to the workings of fate. We may cite an example from the Second Act, third scene in *Macbeth*. Lennox is saying to *Macbeth* in the following words :—

"The night has been unruly where we lay
Our chimneys were blown down, and, *as they say*,
Lamenting heard in the air, strange screams of death
* * * * *
some say the earth
Was feverous and did shake."

We observe in the italicised phrases above that these supernatural happenings are reported from mouth but we are not sure of their authenticity. Shakespeare does not commit himself one way or another in this matter of the supernatural

because to do so would be definitely to assume an existence of a deliberate power outside the range of human experience. All that Shakespeare says and does through the characters in his play falls definitely within the range of human experience. This is not to say that the plays do not contain any reference to the existence or absence of the supernatural ; only it means that Shakespeare's handling of dramatic irony does not admit of a definite belief in the influence of supernatural agencies on human affairs.

(*iv*) Pathetic Fallacy

The fourth and the last form under which a suggestion of the supernatural is hinted at in a Shakespearean tragedy is what is generally regarded as pathetic fallacy. By pathetic fallacy we mean in general any form of writing in which human sentiments and feelings are ascribed to inanimate objects of Nature, as for example, when we say that Nature weeps when it is raining, or that it laughs when it is shining. This is a fallacy which Ruskin pointed out long ago although it is very commonly used by some writers like Charles Dickens with a masterly touch. It is also a type of natural symbolism in which human nature is seen against a background of Nature that seems to sympathise with the destiny of individuals. However, in the Shakespearean drama this is sparingly utilised although we have evidence enough to show that he did use it in some of his scenes both in tragedy and comedy. We should note that this type of suggestion does not admit of supernatural in the same way as the suggestion of the workings of fate and tragic irony and the ghosts and witches do. We have only a semi-supernatural suggestion hinted at in the use of the pathetic fallacy for the working here is of natural not supernatural effects, although it is represented in a manner so as to imply a set of circumstances that do not definitely accord with natural phenomena as we commonly understand and experience these. Examples of such natural symbolism suggesting a semi-supernatural interference with human affairs in Shakespeare's plays may be found in *The Merchant of Venice* in *Much Ado About Nothing*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. We know that in *King Lear* the extraordinarily vivid and exciting scene of the storm in the play is made to symbolise the old

king's inner storm of his passions and affections. That is why the scene on the heath where the old king raves and frets affects us so unfailingly. Just listen to these wonderfully expressed words of Lear : Raves the old king :

"Rumble thy bellyful ! Spit fire ! Spout rain !
Nor wind, rain, thunder, fire, are my daughters :
I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness ;
I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
You owe me no subscription : then let fall
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man ;
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters joined
Your high-engendered battles' gainst a head
So old and white as this ! O ! 'tis foul !

Thus the outer storm and lightning on the heath is made to symbolise the inner storm of passion in the aged breast of the king which ultimately assumes insanity.

So it is in *Macb th.* The gloom and darkness in the room in which Duncan is murdered by Macbeth are only outward symbols of the inner darkness of Macbeth's mind and heart that eventuate in a determination to stab the king. We are told by Macbeth how he felt the situation before he murdered his royal monarch :

".........Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleeper : witchcraft celebrates
Pale Hecate's offerings : and withered murder,
Alarmed by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl is his watch, thus with his
stealthy pace
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost."

We see in this way that Shakespeare uses the symbolism to make us aware of the state of mind of excited horoes by painting before us a scene which but reflects the inner nature of human beings in particular situation. If that state of mind is happy we are aware of an equally happy picture of Nature outside, but if dismal (as in *Lear* and *Macbeth*) we see the reflection of this in the outer world.

In summing up, then, we will remember that in a Shakespearean tragedy the supernatural is made to represent but the state of the mind of the characters whom it is seen apparently to influence It is not the witches in *Macbeth* who goad the hero on to the murder of his royal guest, Duncan, but it is his own ambition which is further supplemented by that of his wife, Lady Macbeth. If it be asked why does Shakespeare use these such representations of the supernatural as those of ghosts, witches and fate, etc. it should be answered by saying that the audience is made to clearly visualise the inner state of the characters in such objectifications of their subjective conditions. Besides it should not be forgotton that the audience whom Shakespeare addressed did believe in witchcraft and ghosts and such other supernatural manifestations The greatness of Shakespeare, however, consists in his universality because even the modern audience is equally impressed with such figuring of the intangible (although it does not believe in it at all) because the modern audience reads in such supernatural portrayal nothing more than a rationalisation, an objectification and a symbol of the inner state of consciousness of the characters concerned. This we are made to realise because the supernatural is made to be associated only with some, not all, characters in a play. Both Banquo and Macbeth, for instance, see the witches and listen to their divinations, but it is only Macbeth who stands 'rapt withal' because he finds himself in the position of a guilty conscience surprised by the witches' revelations, whereas Banquo with his innocent and clean conscience never attaches any great significance to the sayings of the three weird sisters. Such then is the handling by Shakespeare of the agents of the supernatural in all his tragedies. It is a sure sign of sanity and commonsense of Shakespeare who, although he respected tradition for what it was worth, yet never, compromised his freedom of individual judgment by an unconditional acceptance of its implications.

X. THE RELATION OF CHARACTER TO DESTINY

The relation of character to destiny in a Shakespearean play is so vital and at the sametime mystifying that critics are divided as to the precise implications of this problem. Some scholars argue that in a Shakespearean tragedy it is the charac-

ter who ultimately decides the destiny and such arguing points to the fact that character is destiny itself Others argue that it is not character that determines destiny, but circumtances which shape character itself. This means that character is not destiny at all. So these two statements of critics, namely, character is destiny, and character is not destiny in a Shakespearean tragedy must be considered and their implications appreciated and criticised by the students of Shakespearean drama.

If, as some critics would have it, character decides its own destiny in a Shakespearean tragedy, we have to assume that Macbeth is a murderer, Othello a jealous man and Hamlet thoughtless and ungenerous. This, apparently, is not true, because Macbeth was not a political murderer until the time of his murder of Duncan. On the other hand he is represented as a loyal servant of the monarch in Scotland. By such evidence of the characters in Shakespeare's tragedies we come to the inescapable conclusion that character is emphatically not destiny It is the circumstances which shape the characters in the tragedies, not *vice versa*.

But the position of those who maintain that character is destiny in a Shakespearean tragedy is not altogether untenable. It could be defended on the following lines of argument. We may say that if the characters change places with others their destinies will be quite distinct from what actually happens in the tragedis. Let us try to put it in a different manner. Let us suppose, for example, that Hamlet is placed in the position and circumstances of Macbeth and Macbeth in Hamlet's. If this is done it is easy to see that the destiny of these two characters thus placed in each other's circumstances will be quite different from what actually is theirs as the tragedies stand. And this evidently means that character is destiny because in the changed circumstances the heroes will respond according to their characters. We know that the destiny which is ultimately Macbeth's (that is to say, the murder of Duncan and all the tragedy that arises out of this murder) arises from the character of Macbeth which is that of a wholly practical nature. Macbeth is not given to thought and introspective criticism and weighing of probabilities. His

character is that of an eminently practical man befitting his soldierly and martial nature. Now if Hamlet, with his eminently reflective meditative and introspective character is made to respond to the circumstances of Macbeth, there will be no murder so thoughtlessly committed by Macbeth And so the tragedy will not arise at all. It is the same if Macbeth is put in the situation that Hamlet is made to face. With his own innate sense of the practical Macbeth would never waste his time in soliloquies beginning with 'To be or not to be,' rather he would (in keeping to his character) act on the spur of the moment and so, again, there would be no tragedy at all. The tragedy in *Hamlet*, we know, arises out of the doubts and delays of Hamlet which a practical minded individual like Macbeth would never indulge in. All which goes to prove the indubitable fact that in a Shakespearean tragic suffering which the heroes experience, arises directly out of their own individual temperament which constitutes character. And in so doing they create and shape their own destiny.

Such seems to be the drift of the implications arising from the statement of those who assert that in a Shakespearean tragedy character is emphatically decisive of destiny. Such a statement asserts no more than the indubitable fact that man is mainly responsible for his actions and words. He cannot legitimately complain against a set of circumstances in the creating of which he himself is the cause. And when critics say that character is not destiny and argue that Macbeth is not a murderer, nor Othello a jealous husband, they are confusing the two aspects of the individual's character in question. They bring in the extra romantic character of Macbeth when they say that he is not a common political murderer. That may well be so but it has nothing to do with the dramatic character of Macbeth on which alone we could base our criticism. Until the moment of the drama, Macbeth may well have been free from any motive of murder or monarchical ambition. But right from the beginning of the play (in fact when he first meets the witches in the play) Macbeth is a potential murderer and the tragedy arises out of this initial murderous character. We are not justified in bringing in pre-dramatic considerations of the historical character of Macbeth. Shakespeare is writing a tragedy, not a history

of Macbeth. And what is germane here is how his character is conceived by the dramatist. The character of Macbeth is conceived, as no one will deny, to be that of an ambitious general fired by the idea of becoming the king of Scotland. Already in the beginning of the play Macbeth finds himself gradually rising from his political and public status. He learns that he is already the Thane of Glamis (by succession) and the Thane of Cawdor (by Duncan's promotion). His ambition of becoming the king of Scotland is thus already getting to realise itself! How should he resist the next higher status? Therefore, the goading on of his own ambition is the nucleus of his character from the beginning of the play and the question of political murder comes quite logically out of this ambition of Macbeth's character. To put it bluntly Macbeth is emphatically a political murderer and his character is certainly conceived by Shakespeare on the line of one. It will be quite in keeping with the dramatic evidence of the tragedies to affirm that in a Shakespearean tragedy individual character is decisive of individual destiny.

The following words of Professor Allardyce Nicoll are pertinent to our point and shed considerable light on our present discussion. "The relationship of the hero," says this critic, "to his surroundings is the definitely characteristic mark of the Shakespearean tragedy. All Shakespeare's heroes are set in positions where they, and they alone, cannot battle with fate. Hamlet, the 'religious' and the lover, doomed to set the world aright, Othello, stupid and unintellectual, fiery in his passions, set opposite to Iago; Iago unscrupulous and clever; literally tempted by Othello's imbecility; Lear, conceited and proud, unobservant and credulous, faced by his evil daughters and Cordelia, Macbeth, emotional and weak, yet ambitious, met by the witches and goaded on by his wife; Lady Macbeth hard and self-seeking, confronted by temptation;.............. all of these are placed in the exact situation which they are incapable of mastering. Put Hamlet in Othello's place or Othello in Hamlet's and there would have been no tragedy. It is this almost fatal confronting of the hero with forces beyond his strength that marks the tragedy of Shakespeare."

It will be evident from these illuminating remarks and the examples illustrating them that Shakespeare did emphatically

place great importance on the relation of his hero's character to his surroundings and thus showed what influence character sheds on one's environment and destiny. We will, therefore, now sum up by saying that in a Shakespearean tragedy character is emphatically destiny; but we must hasten to qualify this statement by the words of another critic. "Shakespeare's object undoubtedly was to intensify the fate-sense in his dramas. His tragedies are not mere tragedies of character. Character may be, as some critics have asserted, destiny for him, but that is only part of the truth. Shakespeare's conception of tragedy involved; over and above character, the suggestion of fatal forces, operating on the actions of mankind, placing these men of power, nobility, strength and courage in just those situations with which they were incapable of dealing. The minds of these characters are left free, but their desires and their thoughts are only too frequently warped out of their original form ... In place of the 'Character is Destiny' theory we might state as Shakespeare's final doctrine "Character and Destiny".

This is a wise view of the question we are discussing in that it reconciles both the opposite theories with which we began this problem of the relation of Character to Destiny in a Shakespearean tragedy. We may, therefore, note in this connection that Shakespeare gives character as well as destiny their due place in his tragedies.

XI. THE ATMOSPHERE OF MACBETH

Macbeth—a study of evil. The tragedy of *Macbeth* is awful; it is not only the story of a ghastly murder—it presents the tragedy of two souls caught in the toils of evil, and the inner tragedy is far more important than the outer one. The play is a study of evil; there is evil in the soul of the hero and of the heroine; evil deeds are committed; and evil forces are hovering in the air luring men to crime. And the whole action, crimson with blood is steeped in an atmosphere that is quite in keeping with, and contributes to, the general effect of the tragedy. It is due to a variety of influences that act and react one another.

Night and darkness pervade the play. The play begins with the appearance of three unearthly figures in a blasted

heath. The day has been fair before their coming—now it is foul; and in this foul weather, the dark forces of evil are hatching a dark conspiracy. We are thus brought into the dark atmosphere of the play, "dark without, as it is within the soul of the characters." Night and tempest pervade the play. "Darkness, we may even say blackness, broods over this tragedy." All the important scenes of the play take place at night or at some dark spot. Duncan is murdered at night, Banquo perishes in darkness, and his ghost comes at night to appal his murderer, Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep, conscience-stricken at night. Night is also represented in words that strike terror; it is the time when the wolf begins to howl, and the owl to scream, and when withered murderer steals out and moves like a ghost to his design. Macbeth exhorts the stars to hide their fires, so that his "black and deep desires" may remain concealed: Lady Macbeth calls upon the night to come palled in the dunnest smoke of hell. After the murder is committed, Lady Macbeth cannot endure darkness and has light by her continually: but the darkness of hell unceasingly haunts her imagination.

Pervading presence of blood. Besides this atmosphere of darkness brooding like a thick pall over the play, there is another element that powerfully strikes the imagination—the pervading presence of blood. There is hardly any scene in *Macbeth* in which the word 'blood' does not occur. In fact, the whole action of *Macbeth* is red with blood. The hero, even before he murders Duncan, has "bathed in the reeking wounds" of his slaughtered foes. The imagination of Macbeth constantly conjures up blood. The air-drawn dagger is marked with gouts of blood; the blood of Duncan that sticks to his hand will 'incarnadine' all the oceans of the globe; the ghost of Banquo has bloody wounds on the head. Lady Macbeth even as she enters, calls upon the spirits of evil to make her blood thick, so that the passage of pity be blocked; the smell of blood sticks to her hand years after the murder, and the perfume of Arabia cannot sweeten it; the haunting memory of Duncan's blood appals her day and night—" yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" In the last scene Macduff brings the bleeding head of Macbeth. The whole story seems to have been envisaged by the poet through

crimson light, and it appears as though the very blackness of night is stained with blood.

Violent and unnatural actions and events. There are in *Macbeth* constant references to violent actions, unnatural events and fierce convulsions in nature, which combine to produce an impression of horror. We hear of ship-wrecking storms and direful thunders, of tempests that blow down trees and churches and castles, of the frightful hurricane of the night when Duncan was murdered. In nature something is felt to be at work, sympathetic with human guilt and supernatural malice ; she labours with portents ;

> Lamentings heard in the air, strange screams of death ;
> And prophesying with accents terrible,

burst from her. The owl clamours all through the night ; Duncan's horses devour each other in frenzy ; the dawn comes, but brings no light with it.

Thus, Shakespeare brings together in *Macbeth* all kinds of horrible images in order to awaken horror. But what persists in the mind is the combind impression of darkness and blood. " Tempest and terror, blasting lightning, and everywhere the scent and sight of blood, are the outward image of the inward life in the Weird Sisters and the murderers. This dreadful darkness of the play, spiritual and physical, is deepened at the beginning by the supernatural prophecies which contain in them the slaughter of the king".—*S. A. Brooke.*

XII. SHAKESPEARE'S USE OF PROSE IN MACBETH

(*a*) As the drama gives a concentrated picture of life, its language must necessarily be compact and intense. The speech of common life needs to be intensified, because the drama is an imaginative and idealised rendering of life. But because the drama is primarily meant to be staged, its language must be easily intelligible to the audience ; and because it represents a section of real life, idealised though it may be, its language cannot be entirely divorced from the speech of common life. The language of the drama therefore should be compact and dignified on the one hand, and easy and elastic on the other. Shakespeare uses verse as the normal

medium of dramatic speech; his verse, essentially dramatic in character, is tense or passionate or dignified according to the needs of the occasion.

There are however certain kinds of dialogue for which verse is not suited: for such dialogue Shakespeare uses prose. Prose is mainly the language of comedy: witty, intimate dialogue, full of quick turns, can be best expressed in prose. The middle comedies of Shakespeare are mostly in prose. The fools and comic characters speak prose; Touchstone, for instance, never drops into verse The bright, scintillating dialogue between Benedick and Beatrice is naturally in prose. Shakespeare gives prose to characters of humble position—*e.g.*, servants, attendants, soldiers or sailors. For scenes of low life, prose is the normal medium. The Gravediggers' scene in *Hamlet* and the Porter scene in *Macbeth* belong to this class. There is another kind of dialogue for which Shakespeare uses prose which is full of deep, suppressed emotion. Verse would sound artificial on such occasions. " Tense dialogue, full of emotion, but in which the feeling is involved and the thought moves abruptly and in tangents, cannot gain and probably loses, if expressed in verse." Shakespeare uses prose also to express the utterance of a person whose mind is deranged. Ophelia and Lear speak prose when they are mad, though normally they speak verse; Hamlet and Edgar are made to use prose when they affect insanity. There are however certain kinds of dialogue for which prose and verse are equally suited; in dialogues of a descriptive, expository or argumentative character, Shakespeare employs both verse and prose. Letters, proclamations, documents, and the like are always in prose. One thing, however, should be noticed, and it is the transition from prose to verse, and from verse to prose in the same scene. The tragic character, for instance, speaks always in verse, except where they are sarcastic, ironical or bitter. Hamlet always speaks verse, but when he is bitter and sarcastic as in his conversation with Polonius or Ophelia, he lapses into prose.

Shakespeare's practice was however not the same all through his career. In the early period of his authorship,

he accepted verse as the normal medium of dramatic speech and used prose only for special reasons. He stuck to this convention in some measure throughout his dramatic career but as he acquired mastery, he began to use prose more and more. In the middle comedies he employs prose almost as the normal form of expression ; verse is used only when the dialogue is sentimental, disguised or passionate. Prose is essentially the language of comedy, while verse is the language of tragedy. The dignity and emotional tension in the tragedy require a heightened and concentrated expression, and Shakespeare employs blank verse. But on occasions even in tragedies, where the dramatist provides relief in the comic scenes, he very appropriately uses prose. The subtle use of prose in *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Lear* is always governed by artistic motive, and never by convention. In the romantic plays of the last period, verse is used in the romantic scenes and prose in the comic scenes.

(*b*) Dramatic Irony in Macbeth

Irony implies a contrast between the thoughts which a person designs to express and that which his words properly signify ; ordinarily it is saying the contrary of what is intended to be understood. In a drama irony denotes a visible contrast between what is uttered on the stage and what is understood by the audience from it. It is " the realisation by the audience of something that is concealed from the characters on the stage. In another sense it may be defined as the uttering of an unconscious truth by some character." Thus when a character speaks on the stage he or she fails to realise the inner significance of what they utter and it is only known to the audience. This is a device generally resorted to by Shakespeare in all his plays, and in *Macbeth* we find several examples of this dramatic device.

There is decidedly some element of irony when Duncan congratulates Macbeth and condemns the Thane of Cawdor as a person who had betrayed his confidence. The temptation and desire in the heart of Macbeth is not known to Duncan, but we as audience know it and feel the irony of it when the king speaks of the Thane of Cawdor, " he was a gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust."

Duncan compliments Lady Macbeth on her hospitality and sends presents to his 'most kind hostess.' All the time she is planning to have the king removed. The lady who impatiently tells her husband that 'a little water' will clear them of the deed is oppressed by the sight and smell of blood in the later scenes and bemoans over the spot that can never be erased and 'the little hand which all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten.'

The porter, when he humorously refers to himself as the porter of Hellgate, is unconsciously uttering the truth. He is quite unaware of the gruesome tragedy that is being enacted within the castle, but the audience are in the secret and can understand the irony of the situation.

Macbeth curses all those who believe in the weird sisters but forgets that he himself has been deceived by them and he is the first to feel the effect of the curse.

(c) Dramatic Relief

Dramatic relief consists of a sudden change in the emotional interest, a relaxation, a diversion produced in the drama by the introduction of new scenes, and new 'tones of passion.' It is produced 'by simple variety and alteration of light and serious passions.' And this mixture of light and serious touches is very important in a play like *Macbeth* where the events move to a climax with terrible rapidity and where the imagination of the audience is ever kept working of a series of impressions coming one after another in quick succession. The change in the tone of the play, moreover, heightens the tragic impression by a sense of contrast; it will also relieve the audience from the emotional strain to which they are subjected throughout the play.

The Porter Scene is a striking example of 'tone relief.' After witnessing the conflict of Macbeth's soul, the contrast between the iron will of Lady Macbeth and the weaker nature of her husband, after hearing the wild imagery of Lady Macbeth which by their very magnitude strike us with awe, after seeing the blood dabbed dagger descending in the air, and finally the crime itself, it is a relief for us to hear the jolly old porter making his comments and admitting people slowly, one

by one, into the castle at his own leisure. It provides a temporary break in our emotion which had been keyed up to the highest pitch by the quick march of events. Here at least we feel we can breathe freely without the fear of being struck down by an unknown assassin. Moulton considers the dramatic tone relief in *Macbeth*. 'One of the best examples (notwithstanding its coarseness) is the introduction in *Macbeth* of the jolly porter who keeps the impatient nobles outside in the storm till his jest is comfortably finished, making each furious knock fit into his elaborate conceit of Hellgate. This tone of broad farce, with nothing else like it in the whole play, comes as a single ray of common daylight to separate the agony of the dark night's murder from the agony of the struggle for concealment.' Some critics comment that the jesting of the porter is out of place, especially considering the crimes that had just now been perpetrated and the tragic setting of the play. But we cannot argue with these critics. The tragic emotion cannot always be sustained at its highest pitch ; it requires relief and Shakespeare with his true artistic perception realised that a lighter scene would relieve the emotional strain of the audience, but at the same time heighten the tragic tone.

The conversation between Lady Macduff and her little son, touching in its simplicity affords further relief to the drama. After moving in the caverns of the witches, witnessing their mysterious rites and hearing their predictions we feel extremely relieved to hear the banter of words between the son and the mother. Unlike Lady Macbeth, Lady Macduff has no political ambitions. She is a simple wife and mother, her entire thoughts are concentrated on her husband, children, and home. In both these scenes 'we escape from the oppression of huge sins and sufferings into the presence of the wholesome affections of unambitious hearts ; and, though both scenes are painful and one dreadful, our sympathies can flow unchecked.' Thus this glimpse into the domestic life of Macduff, a scene full of sweetness, enhances the crime committed later in the scene ; the savage slaughter of a whole family of innocents, appears particularly painful against the background of this tender scene.

Besides these two main Tone Reliefs, serveral minor ones

also may be noted. The realistic description of Macbeth's castle where 'the air,

Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself

Unto our gentler senses', where 'the temple-haunting martlet' build their nests, the appearance of the messenger in the final scene, and the entry of the doctor in Act IV and the mention of the divine powers of the English king, all these tiny details contribute to the play that relaxation and relief so vital to a play steeped to the full with feeling and thought and horror and crime.

(*d*) Poetic Justice in Macbeth

Meaning of Poetic Justice. 'Poetic justice is often understood to mean the correction of justice, as if justice in poetry were more just than the justice of real life.' It is the apportionment of rewards and punishments exactly according to the merits and defects of men. In real life, justice sometimes miscarries, sometimes it is perverted, and sometimes there is deliberate injustice. The poet imagines ideal conditions under which miscarriage or perversion of justice would not be possible; he holds the balance even and distributes rewards and punishments in exact proportion to the deserts of men. This is 'poetic justice' as distinguished from the justice of real life. Moulton defines poetic justice as "the modification of justice by considerations of art." There is in the human heart a secret instinct that good fortune should go with the bright and the good, and sever itself from the mean and the wicked. Poetic justice satisfies this instinct, and has therefore found place in art. "Poetic justice is one of the instincts of the imagination, and in creative literature justice must pay tribute to art."

Poetic justice is artificial– Shakespeare does not strictly observe it. But Shakespeare does not strictly observe the conditions of poetic justice in his tragedies, because it is in flagrant contradiction with the facts of life. After all poetic justice implies an artificial dispensation of joy and grief, and would be totally out of place in tragedy, which reveals the terror and mystery of life The death of Cordelia or even of Desdemona might go against the canons of poetic justice,

but Shakespeare is inexorable. He believes in the moral order of the universe, and this moral order is shaken by crime or weakness. Cordelia's obstinacy and Desdemona's weakness have had a part, however small, in disturbing this moral order, and they must pay the penalty. But the punishment they suffer is totally out of proportion to their trivial fault; they have not done anything to deserve the same penalty that overtakes Edmund or Iago. True; but Shakespeare shows how the moral order which was disturbed, cannot be restored except by the sacrifice of much that is good and noble; and that is the tragedy of life.

***Macbeth* fully satisfies demands of poetic justice.** In *Macbeth*, the hero himself is the villain; his crime and the retribution that follows, make up the story of the tragedy. In *Macbeth*, the demands of poetic justice are satisfied because the hero and the heroine are justly punished for the crime they have committed. Here also the moral order operates, but because it operates only to the undoing of the criminals, the canons of poetic justice are fully satisfied.

Macduff. Let us now see how nemesis, which satisfies the demands of poetic justice, operates in *Macbeth*. Macbeth was prompted by his ambition to murder Duncan, and in the end he realises the futility of his ambition. He hoped to gain happiness by seizing the crown, but he never enjoys a moment's peace of mind after he wears it. He has cruelly butchered the wife and children of Macduff, and Macduff becomes the minister of vengeance. It is significant that Macduff is made the instrument of Macbeth's death. We pity and admire Macbeth in spite of his crimes; we await his doom but share his scorn of ordinary antagonists. "It would be unthinkable for Malcolm to defeat him—Malcolm, who fled the country on the first report of his father's death; he has neither the physical strength nor the spirit to conquer the tyrant: it would be distressing if he did so." Macduff is represented in the play as noble and fearless—the only man who is Macbeth's equal in bravery, the only man who by virtue of his suffering and nobility can draw away our sympathy from the hero in the single combat. Macduff kills Macbeth in open fight, and our sense of justice is satisfied.

CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

1. MACBETH.

Like Richard III, Macbeth is a 'one man' play and every event in it revolves round this central character. The progress of events is clearly connected with the character of Macbeth and a clear grasp of his character is highly necessary to understand the different movements of the play. His personality towers through the play and even when he is not actually present on the scene we are all the time thinking of him.

(i) His Courage.

Shakespeare from the very outset attempts to impress us with the personal valour and able generalship of Macbeth by showering on him praise after praise through the various characters and describing him to us in all his glory and nobility fighting against the rebels. The second scene is plainly intended to reveal the character of Macbeth, the brave general of Duncan, fearless and fighting against odds, sure of victory, and never for one moment dismayed. The sergeant's realistic description of the battlefield leaves an impression in our minds of courage and nobility and manhood, which is never completely wiped out even when Macbeth later in the play plunges deep in crime and cowers stands horrified before the ghost of Banquo.

'The merciless Macdonwald......
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isle
Of Kerns and gallow glasses is supplied;
But all's to weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves the name;
Disdaining fortune, with his brandished steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's minion carved out the passage
Till he faced the slave.'

The engagement is won by the personal courage of Macbeth. In spite of the reinforcements the enemy received, brave Macbeth continues the struggle and never leaves his sword 'Till he had 'unseam'd the rebel' from 'the nave to the chaps'

and fixed his head upon the battlements. The king of Norway seeing an advantage opens fresh attack only to be forced back again by Macbeth and

'As cannons overcharged will double cracks, so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or memorise another Golgotha.'

Ross newly arrived from the battlefield is also full of the heroic achievements of Macbeth.

'The thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict;
Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof,
Confronted him with self-comparisons,
Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us:'

Thus in the early part of the play Macbeth is the noble hero, fearless, undaunted, the life and soul of Duncan's army. Shakespeare's idea is to paint him as a brave and brilliant man so that when he plunges in crime, and his character steadily declines, some amount of pity may yet be left for him in our hearts.

(*ii*) His Ambition

But this noble and brave general has one main flaw in his armour! his overmastering ambition. Like Richard III his inordinate ambition finally leads him to his ruin. He has everything, he is already thane of Galmis, is made the thane of Cawdor; but that is not enough He must aspire for the crown. It is a mistake to suppose that the seed of ambition was sown in his heart for the first time by the witches. The very fact that he starts at the prediction of the witches plainly shows that the desire is there securely hidden, but suddenly brought to light by the unexpected prophecy of the witches. Thus the slumbering desire in his heart is wakened by the supernatural words of the three witches 'All hail, Macbeth, thou shalt be king hereafter' fan the flame of the desire in his heart. Till his arrival at Inverness, however, his ambition does not have visible form; it is vague and unplanned.

'I have no spur

> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition. which o'erleap itself
> And falls on other'.

This open confession of Macbeth about the innate desire of his heart is further confirmed by the words of Lady Macbeth :—

> 'thou wouldst be great ;
> Are not without ambition, but without
> The illness should attend it :'

(*iii*) **His Imagination.**

Judging by the words of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth has ambition, but not the determination necessary for the accomplishment of it. If the throne comes to him through any evil way, it would not matter to him ; his hesitation is only about the deed and he himself doing it. This trait in her husband's character is clearly revealed by Lady Macbeth when she says :—

> 'what thou wouldst highly
> That wouldst thou holily : wouldst not play false,
> And yet wouldst wrongly win :'

His revulsion was only against the idea of its being perpetrated by himself. If another person does the deed he would not think twice about enjoying the gains. He refrains from doing wrong not from principles, but only from custom and the fear of detection.

Prof. Bradley emphasises on the danger of taking the words of Lady Macbeth too seriously. It is possible that Lady Macbeth has not understood the character of her husband with all its curious complexities. Perhaps he has understood it himself. Macbeth is pre-eminently a man of action, but along with it he has also the imagination of a poet. His hesitation is not due to fear of detection or because he is a coward, or a common, mean, ignoble murderer. He does not shrink from the deed because it is dangerous. He is not the shrinking cruel coward, he is represented to by some critics. Macbeth has not understood himself He is bold, brave and ambitious, but is sensitive, imaginative aud full of a high sense of duty and honour. So before the deed there is a struggle in the heart of Macbeth between these good and bad elements ; for one

moment it almost looks as though his nobler impulses would succeed, but the entrance of Lady Macbeth, the base element of his composition, his ambition comes out triumphant. His imagination raises before him images which horrify him and these 'terrifying images which deter him from crime and follow its commission, and which are really the protests of his deepest self, seem to his wife the creations of nervous fear, and are sometimes referred to by himself to the dread of vengeance or the restlessness of insecurity.'

Macbeth's imagination lacks the meditative and reflective powers of that of Hamlet. It lacks the broader outlook of the imagination of Hemlet. Hamlet can realise the purity of human soul, and the infinite faculty of humanity. Not so Macbeth. His imagination, though easily excited and intense, sometimes even violent, is narrow and confined in its outlook. He cannot understand the beauties of human soul. In the words of Prof. Bradley 'That which stimulates it, is almost solely, that which thrills with sudden startling, and often supernatural fear'. Macbeth is frightened because he has transgressed virtue; he is more appalled by the images of his horrible, bloody deed. He is mad with horror, but not the horror of detection of his crime. If it had been so, he would have left the daggers in the chambers himself, he would have immediately washed his bloodstained hand. It was the word 'Amen' that stuck in his throat, completely unnerved him and brought before his mind the possibility that the parching of his throat was an immediate judgment from heaven.

(*iv*) **His Superstition.**

Macbeth is brave on the field of battle. There is nothing in the world he would not dare. There is no palpable danger he cannot face. But being highly imaginative by nature he has a morbid fear of everything dark and gloomy. That accounts for his violent agitation and hallucination in the dagger scene, or perhaps even in the ghost scene. He can face facts but before images he quakes. Hear Macbeth's words addressed to the ghost :—

'What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger;

Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or, be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then, protest me
The baby of a girl.'

Now to what can we attribute this great terror of Macbeth? Whether a mere apparition or a mere hallucination, Macbeth, so bold and brave everywhere else, is unnerved. This again we can attribute only to his imagination. He has the natural fear of the supernatural and is contrasted strongly with the character of Banquo, who is indifferent to their favours or hate. It is this very superstition that first hurries him on to crime, believing in the mere prediction of the witches. Again the same belief makes him shut himself up in the castle, confident of the sense of security given by the apparition, without making any attempt whatever to meet his enemies point to point. Thus this superstition, which we have found is the natural consequence of his highly strung mind, is both his strength and weakness at the same time. The visions of the past fling him to the lowest depths of despair. He sees visions which only he can see, the air-drawn dagger, Banquo's ghost, and finally the apparitions, appear only to him. Macbeth has a superficial nobility, but is uninfluenced by the cultivation of inner life. This lack of control over his thoughts, this uncultivated inner nature of his, give rise to supernatural imaginings and make him weak as a man of action.

(*v*) His Weakness of Will

Much has been said on the weakness of will of Macbeth in the early scenes. This weakness is specially brought out by contrast to the stronger nature of Lady Macbeth His unchecked imagination visualises daggers in the air, and he trembles at the very thought of the crime: he hesitates, argues, and almost decides to give it up. Then Lady Macbeth enters and appeals to his manhood and his love for her and Macbeth has not the courage to resist. She attacks him with cowardice and the spirit of the brave soldier is nettled, and he replies

'I dare do all that may become a man
Who dares do more, is none.'

But Macbeth has neither the moral courage, nor the will-power to make his stand against her cruel taunt, and he finally succumbs and promises to do the deed.

(*vi*) Macbeth as a Man of Action.

We have found that Macbeth as a man of action has one limitation: his extravagant imagination. And this imagination deters him from his purpose. But the moment he gets free from the grips of his imagination, he is no longer 'infirm of purpose', but is primarily the man of action. With a cool grasp of facts he foresees all the difficulties he may have to face. Banquo would be a serious obstacle to his progress and hence he should be removed. When once he starts on his career of crime, there is no more any hesitation about him. One crime leads to another, and then a series of crimes; his only interest is in the security of his kingship, and every obstacle in the way should be set aside. He becomes the thoroughly practical man of action, bold, ruthless, and domineering.

Morally Macbeth is very weak. He has not that disciplined mind so necessary to a man of action. He has not that mental courage, that self-control, so vital to the world of action. He can act, and while he acts he forgets everything. but he cannot put upon himself any restraint when the action does not move. He becomes the victim of his own morbid fancies and these lead to his betrayal and final ruin. Again Macbeth's soliloquy does not reveal itself as a struggle between sin and virtuous passion. It is of an intensely practical nature to all outside appearances and Macbeth is concerned more about the immediate consequences than about the retribution to come.

But it must not be forgotten here that the struggle is really between the sparks of good and evil in his nature. As Bradley points out 'what really holds him back is the hideous vileness of the deed' He asks the question 'could he realise thus how horrible this deed will look to others if it were not equally horrible to himself?' Thus it is his moral weakness and his morbid imagination that prevent him from being the perfect man of action. If he had been morally strong there would not have been a struggle at all. The chief defect lies in his imagi-

nation. It is not fear, or the chance of detection that unnerves him; it is only his violent imagination. It is this violent imagination again that is responsible for his fear of the supernatural, every thing unreal, and unnatural. If Macbeth's imagination had been strengthened with a stronger will, he would have been the perfect man of action, besides being a brave and honest man.

(*vii*) **His steady Decline in Character.**

After the first crime, the murder of Duncan, a steady decline may be noticed in the character of Macbeth. The noble impulses, which for a time had struggled for supremacy, have been completely stifled; and after the first hesitation, whether it be the horror of crime or the fear of consequences, Macbeth thunders along plucking aside every obstacle from his path with ruthless force. He has already sullied his soul and a crime or two would not in any way matter. After the murder of Duncan he does not get the peace and security he had anticipated; it is immediately followed by the murder of Banquo. But he is not, as yet, a hardened criminal. The ghost of Banquo still plagues him; his imagination is still a flame with the crime. The death of Banquo does not give him any security and peace. His suspicion next falls on the nobles specially Macduff, but Macduff is already out of his reach. Then it is that we realise to what depth his career of crime has plunged him. A whole family of innocent ones is wiped out without the least vestige of pity. This man, once brave, once generous, once running mad at the very thought of crime, now does not hesitate to murder innocent women and children by dozens. He speaks no more of honour, and pity, and hospitality; no more has he any remorse. His good angel has evidently left him. His only thought is about personal security and the retribution to come, and he sinks to the level of a common, base, ignoble, callous murderer. Like Richard III now he revels in crime. The firstlings of his heart are the firstlings of his hand. He becomes a tyrant so that in Scotland

'Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds

As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.

In later years he adds lechery and avarice to his other crimes. His ruin is almost complete so that

'Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils, to top Macbeth.'

(*viii*) His Final Change of Outlook.

But, nevertheless, Macbeth's destruction is not complete. The nobility of his soul is not completely destroyed. We can still pity him and sympathise him. From the depths of his crimes he looks up to what might have been, if only he had followed a nobler walk of life. But now he cannot look forward to anything.

'Any that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends'

he must not look to have ; to him life is only a brief candle, a pageant. The final impression, that we get, is not one of being crushed. There is something that arrests our respect in the very defiance that he flings towards heavens.

It will be entirely erroneous to consider Macbeth a cold calculating villain, a callous murderer. Despite his crime, his ambition, his lack of will-power to resist the temptation of the witches on the one hand and the passionate persuasion of Lady Macbeth on the other, there is something sublime in his character. The sparks of good once existed in his nature, but these were completely stifled, plucked by the root and flung away. Macbeth, however, never completely loses our sympathy. His courage, his tender love for his wife, the good prompting of his soul before the first murder, are all points in his favour which leave an indelible impression in our minds. It is the story of a good and noble soul brought to its ruin and realising only too late the futility of things.

2. LADY MACBETH.

A grand figure in literature.—Lady Macbeth is undoubtedly the most wonderful female portrait drawn by Shakespeare. She exercises a terrible fascination upon every reader.

She is possessed of a terrific, inflexible will which carries her through every obstacle in her way; but in the accomplishing her end, she has done violence to her nature, so that nature wreaks a most terrible revenge upon her. But she never murmurs. She suffers, and greatly suffers even to the death. The indomitable strength of her character that never acknowledges defeat makes Lady Macbeth one of the grandest figures in literature.

Lady Macbeth's ambition is for her husband—Lady Macbeth is as ambitious as her husband, but her ambition is only for his sake. She longs for the 'golden round' nor for herself but for her husband. But he is weak willed and Lady Macbeth knows it; she doubts, and rightly too, whether he will have the courage to seize the crown when opportunity will present itself. Now when Duncan becomes their guest, opportunity does come. Will she fritter it away? Considerations of right and wrong, good and evil, do not enter into her scheme. She must secure the crown for her husband at any cost—even at the cost of her womanly nature. She is conscious of her own weakness; she is afraid that her essentially feminine nature might shrink from the terrible task before her. She therefore calls upon the spirits that tend on mortal thoughts to "unsex" her and fill her with direst cruelty. She is afraid lest her natural pity should shake her purpose; she therefore invokes the aid of the murdering ministers and appeals to them to take her milk for gall and stop up the recess and passage to remorse. She even drinks wine to keep up her courage and strength. The frail woman succeeds at last in unsexing herself by the exercise of her inflexible will.

No selfishness behind her cruelty.—And what is the motive of Lady Macbeth in doing so? She wants to see the cherished desire of her husband accomplished; she wants to see her husband seated on the throne of Scotland. There is no base selfishness behind her cruelty. Of course this does not excuse or even palliate her guilt. But the terrific power of will, that she brings to the accomplishment of the deed, extorts the admiration of all.

A woman of terrific will-power.—"The greatness of

Lady Macbeth lies almost wholly in courage and force of will". She bears down every scruple of Macbeth by her imperious will. Her reasonings, Bradley says, are mere sophisms ; they could presuade no man. It is through sheer force of will that she induces her husband. The crown of Scotland is glittering before her eyes—she looks at it, and does not care for anything else. The king must be murdered. She does not care whether the king is old or pious or good—whether he is a kinsman or a guest. In her eyes, Duncan stands between her husband and the crown ; hence he must be removed. Conscience, morality, pity, loyalty—nothing weighs with her. She is determined to secure the crown, and no power of heaven or earth can shake her purpose. Macbeth is swept off his feet, and cries out in admiration :

> Bring forth men-children only ;
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males.

But Lady Macbeth is not really so inhuman as she appears to be on the night of murder ; she is not the fiend that Malcolm declares her to be. If she were, the sleep-walking scene would be impossible. The truth of the matter is that on that night she represses all her feminine instincts by the sheer force of her will. Once, however, her weakness manifests itself :

> Had he not resembled
> My father as he slept, I had done it.

She perhaps despises herself for her weakness, but it is there. She invokes the aid of evil spirits because she knows that she is weak. She succeeds in repressing her nature only for a time, for as soon as the deed is accomplished she is exhausted by her superhuman efforts and breaks down.

She lacks imagination.—Lady Macbeth has extraordinary strength of mind but is totally lacking in imagination. She cannot understand her husband's real character ; if she did, she would never instigate him to the crime. She does not understand where the fancies of her husband spring from, and so dismisses them as the outcome of childish fear, and urges him on. Her lack of imagination makes her more practical :

"A little water clears us of this deed."

She lacks imagination to realise that nothing can wash away the guilt in the soul.

Reaction after the crime.—After the murder, Lady Macbeth is totally changed. She is Queen of Scotland, but does not enjoy a moment's peace of mind.

"Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without content;
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

She slowly retires into the background, and suffers silently. In the banquet scene, she once more shows her strong will and self-control, and saves her husband from exposure. After this she does not take any interest in her husband's activities. She feels that she has ruined him, and this thought joined to the haunting memory of the fatal night, makes her miserable. But she retains the strength of her will to the last.

Though every moment of her life is a torment, she never murmurs a word. She keeps alone with her broodings: in the day, she is haunted by the memory of the murdered king, and at night, she dreams of horrors that would make anybody mad. The conscience that she had suppressed awakes into life, and brings terrible retribution. In the sleep-walking scene "we have a glimpse into that inward hell; the seared brain and broken heart are laid before us in the helplessness of slumber. The sleep of her who murdered sleep is no longer repose but a condensation of restless horrors, which the prostrate intellect and the powerless will can neither baffle nor repel. We shudder and are satisfied; yet our human sympathies are touched. We rather sigh over the ruin than exult in it. In the greatness of her punishment we almost forget her crime and feel only pity. And we are struck with awe at the spectacle of that tremendous woman looking with loathsome disgust at her hand and crying, "Out, damned spot! the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'." (*Mrs. Jameson*).

3. Banquo.

In the early part of the play Shakespeare evidently meant Banquo to be a foil to Macbeth and the two characters are clearly contrasted. We meet both the captains for the first time when they return from the battlefield. Banquo has acquitted himself as creditably in the quelling of the rebellion as Macbeth. They were

'As cannons overcharged with double cracks.'

The king appreciates his services as much as those of Macbeth,

'Noble Banquo,
That has no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me unfold thee
And hold thee to my heart.'

Macbeth's estimate of his bold nature and his discretion may be taken at their face value. Being naturally suspicious of Banquo, and perhaps, even jealous of some of his noble virtues, it is quite unlikely that Macbeth would deliberately give us a distorted version of Banquo's character, and that too in his favour. Macbeth appreciates the noble qualities of Banquo,

'It is much he dares,
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety.'

It is interesting to study the impression left in the minds of these captains by the witches. Macbeth, with his highly strung and imaginative temperament, visibly starts at the prediction of the witches. This is something which the noble and straightforward soul of Banquo cannot understand and he asks Macbeth in wonder,

'Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear
Things that sound so fair ?'

Banquo has no guilty heart to hide. He is amazed at the wild, withered hags, with their choppy fingers and skinny lips ; his sense of curiosity is roused at their predictions regarding Macbeth and speaks openly :—

'If you can look into the seed of time

> And say which grain will grow and which will not
> Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
> Your favours nor your hate.'

Their prophecy 'Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none' does not in any way affect him. Macbeth, on the other hand, is seriously moved, the witch had echoed the thoughts of his heart; often in his subsequent conversation with the lords he forgets himself and has to be reminded more than once by Banquo. Banquo does not believe his own sight and asks:

> 'Were such things have as we do speak about ?
> Or have we eaten on the insane root
> That takes the reason prisoner ?'

When part of the witches' predictions have come true, the only impression that it makes on him, is that he is amazed, and asks 'What, can the devil speak true?' What is only an accident, a coincidence to Banquo, to Macbeth, with his imaginative temperament, is really brought about by invisible forces. When Macbeth asks Banquo whether now he does not believe in the prediction, that his issues shall be kings, he warns Macbeth,

> 'That trusted home
> Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,
> Besides the thane of Cawdor ?'

The thoroughly practical man of action that he is, he is not in any way moved by the prediction of the weird sisters.

Banquo is frank, honest and straightforward throughout. Till he arrives at Macbeth's castle he is entirely undisturbed by the prophecies and is keenly alive to the beauty of the place, its repose and joy.

> 'The heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here : no jutty, frieze,
> Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :
> When they most breed and haunt, I have observed
> The air is delicate.'

In the dark stormy night Banquo for the first time feels the influence of the supernatural. He says :

'A heavy summons lies like lead upon me
And yet I would not sleep : merciful powers
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in response'.

Unlike Macbeth, Banquo does not yield to his temptation. He has a stronger nature and with a brave effort casts away all his unholy thoughts. A little later we hear a conversation between the two captains.

Macbeth : If you shall cleave to my consent,
when 'tis,
It shall make honour for you,

Banquo is immediately on his guard and his careful reply is :—

'So I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchised and allegiance clear,
I shall be counselled.'

These words suggest that Macbeth has already foreseen that after the deed Banquo's suspicion will be immediately turned on him and evidently he is preparing the way for an understanding with him. Banquo, fearing a treasonable proposal from it, is afraid to compromise himself. The next day, when the murder is discovered, Banquo's suspicions are at once aroused and he suggests to the lords to hold a general assembly.

'And question the most bloody piece of work
To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us ;
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the undivulged pretence we fight
Of treason's malice.'

There is the true note of sincerity in his words. They are the words of a frank and honest man.

But later we do not hear anything about the meeting of the lords and the enquiry into the crime. According to Prof. Bradley, from this point Banquo ceases to be the brave and honest man that he had been so far. He argues 'when must we see him, on the last day of his life, we find his own

ambition to have conquered him. He alone of the lords knows of the prophecies, but he has said nothing of them. He has acquiesced in Macbeth's accession, and in the official theory that Duncan's sons had suborned the chamberlain to murder him.' And his soliloquy tells us why :

'Thou hath it now : King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the unweird women promised, and, I fear,
Thou play 'dest most foully for't : yet was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But myself should be the root and father
Of many kings If then come truth from them
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine
Why, by the virtues on thee made good.'
' May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope ? But hush ! no more.'

But we cannot agree with Prof. Bradley in this view, 'hush ! no more' is not merely the dismissal of these cursed thoughts as he suggests. It is more than that. Banquo himself is shocked at the flight of his own imagination and checks it, as he had once done on the night of Duncan's murder at Macbeth's castle. Further, it is impossible for us to believe that Shakespeare meant Banquo, the traditional ancestor of James I to have anything to do with the crime. And that he has nothing to do with it is positively proved by Macbeth's own words.

'Our fear in Banquo
Sticks deep, and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be fear'd.'

Would a man so noble and kingly in his bearing be an accomplice to such a vile crime? Most decidedly no. He submits to the accession of Macbeth not from any mean or base motive; either he feels that Macbeth is too strong for him or it is only a temporary resignation to the inevitable circumstances.

4. Duncan.

Duncan, as Shakespeare has presented him, is very different from the Duncan of history, who was a weak and inefficient ruler. Shakespeare has endowed him with royal qualities—dignity, generosity and graciousness. Even Mac-

beth who has sworn to murder him pays a tribute to his nobility:

> This Duncan
> Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
> So clear in his great office, that his virtues
> Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against
> The deep damnation of his taking off.

He is a benevolent king, an amiable man, and is possessed of a refined mind. He is of a peaceful temperament and is too good for the barbarous age in which his lot is cast. He is, by his very nature, unfit to rule a turbulent country with a strong hand. The dominant feature of his character is benevolence—both in speech and action. He is ready to recognise the merits of others and rewards them generously. He has a refined mind and loves nature. He is trustful and unsuspecting; the man (viz., the former thane of Cawdor), in whom he had reposed absolute trust, has betrayed him; yet he places himself in the hands of another man (viz., Macbeth) and never cares to take any precaution to ensure his personal safety. This trustfulness may be a praiseworthy trait of his character, but a king should be more cautious and more shrewd. It is his unsuspecting trustfulness that costs him his life. "The gracious Duncan does not seem to have fallen altogether blameless. This we are led to infer from the numerous revolts against his authority, which Macbeth successively suppressed. Whether they were the result of an arbitrary rule or injustice, or of an unkingly weakness and cowardice, at any rate he is open to the reproach of unfitness for the duties of his office and state."

5. Macduff.

Macduff is to the second half of the play what Banquo is to its first half. When he hears that the chamberlains have killed the king, it sounds to him as something unusual although his suspicions are not aroused. He accepts the official version of the murder for the time being and it is only later that the suspicions of the deed arise in his mind. He whispers to Ross

> 'Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
> Lest our old robes sit easier than our new.'

The most prominent trait in the character of Macduff is

his intense patriotism and his allegiance to his king. After the investiture of Macbeth, while the other nobles attend the banquet at Scone, Macduff curtly refuses, thus incurring the anger of the tyrant. He is not afraid of provoking his anger and declaring open hostility on him. And this lack of discretion and caution has only one result. Macbeth in a fit of rage orders the whole family to be slaughtered. Macduff, however, has already escaped to England; he would rather banish himself from his country than be under the hateful rule of a usurping tyrant.

In England Macduff's entire efforts are directed to persuade Malcolm to return to Scotland and win his throne back from Macbeth. But Malcolm is suspicious, and to test Macduff imputes to himself all the evil qualities one could imagine, and tells him that he is quite unfit to be the king of Scotland, in fact he would be a worse ruler than Macbeth with his lechery and avarice. Then breaks forth the passionate lament from the true patriot: 'O Scotland! Scotland.' His intense patriotism shines through all his speeches. He has left his castle, his wife, his children, only to save his 'down-fallen birthdom.'

The flight of Macduff to England is violently criticised by Lady Macbeth. She does not realise that it is a matter of necessity. He could not have foreseen the wanton murder of his wife and children. He is noble, wise, and clear-sighted. We have to accept the words of Ross:—

'My dearest coz,
I pray you, school yourself: but for your husband,
He is noble, wise, judicious and best knows
The fits o' the season.'

He loves his wife and children, but he loves his country more His country should be saved at all costs. And his silent grief at the news of the savage slaughter of his wife and children bears testimony to his love and affection for his family. His soul is struck by anguish. Malcolm comforts him:—

'What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows:
Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whisper the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.'

But his grief would be the whetstone of his sword. The

cherished desire of his heart is to see his country free, and his share in the liberation of his country is not an inconsiderable one.

Like Banquo, Macduff does not calmly await events. He is the man of action and does not waste his time in words. He does not discuss their prospects and hopes like the other leaders but remains silent. He tells them

'let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.'

His revenge is a sacred rite to him. If Macbeth is slain by any other hand than his, his 'wife's and children's ghosts will haunt him still.' When he actually meets the object of his vengeance he does not waste any idle breath, but flings at him an open challenge and sets himself to the attack.

'I have no words.
My voice is my sword: thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!'

6. Lady Macduff.

In peaceful home of Lady Macduff, we breathe for a time the air of heaven; love presides over the home. Lady Macduff is a happy wife and mother who does not think of anything but her own home. She cannot find any justification for her husband running away to England, and then by doing so, exposing her children to terrible danger. Is he so selfish as to think of his own safety only? Then he does not love his wife and children. She is angry with her husband—and she has good reason to be so. She tries to divert her mind from the peril that threatens her, by engaging in an innocent prattle with her little boy. And the talk of the mother and the son is one of the most refreshing things in the play. (Bradley remarks that the boy is the only person in the tragedy who provokes a smile.)

Lady Macduff is a worthy wife of her husband. Though her heart sinks within her breast at the sight of the horrible unknown faces, she gives a bold answer to the question of one of the murderers. The last words of the dying boy prove him to be the worthy son of his father. He is stabbed by one of these cruel butchers; he is dying, but he tells his mother to

run away. These brief touches bear on them the eternal stamp of Shakespeare's genius.

7. Malcolm.

The character of Malcolm is not fully drawn, but the general lines on which Shakespeare meant to develop the character, are well indicated. In Malcolm we get the courtesy, generosity and sweetness of disposition of Duncan, as well as caution, discretion, and clear-sightedness. Like his father he does not fall into the traps dug for him in spite of the repeated efforts of Macbeth. With his wonderful sagacity, after the murder of his father, he takes a calm view of the situation and decides that, for the present the best thing for him would be flight. He has estimated the character of those around him fairly well and tells Donalbain

'This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest ways
Is to avoid the aim'.

He realises that if he tarries at the castle any longer his life would be in imminent peril.

It is only this caution and discretion that saves Malcolm from the clutches of Macbeth. The self-disparagement, which he practises with Macduff, is only to test him. As he himself says already.

'devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste'.

When he understands the sincerity of Macduff from his passionate wail on the fate of Scotland, he declares he has none of the vices which he had imputed to himself a little while ago :—

'I am yet
Unknown to woman, never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life : my first false speaking
Was this upon myself : what I am truly
Is thine and my poor country's, to command.'

Malcolm with his clear foresight strikes at the opportune moment. With the help of the English king, and with a company of his honest countrymen to help him, his success is almost certain. The battle of Dunsinane is fought and won and we feel there is a new era of prospect and happiness about to dawn on Scotland.

8. **Ross.**

Ross does not play any prominent part in the events that take place in the drama, but is still a necessary link to keep the audience posted about the different events that take place in the play. Twice he acts as messenger. We meet him for the first time when he brings news of the repeated successes of the king's forces over the rebels. In the discovery scene he is one of the nobles present. He is the messenger who goes to England to inform Macduff about the revolts of certain noblemen and the cold-blooded slaughter of his wife and children.

Ross is just the average gentleman courtier. He does not have any outstanding virtues or any special vices. He is equally popular with all the three kings. He is the immediate attendant on Duncan. He is present at Macbeth's banquet. The new king Malcolm also holds in trust. He is evidently not much of a thinker. He is taken aback at the suggestion that Malcolm and Donalbain have murdered their father, but does not seriously consider the matter. That penetration and foresight so prominent in Macduff is entirely absent in him. Even in the banquet scene he is simply confused and bewildered; he is unable to guess the events from the strange behaviour of Macbeth.

MACBETH

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.

MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, } his sons.

MACBETH, BANQUO, } generals of the King's army.

MACDUFF, LENNOX, ROSS, MENTEITH, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, } noblemen of Scotland.

FLEANCE, son to Banquo.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, general of the English forces.

Young SIWARD, his son.

SEYTON, an officer attending on Macbeth.

Boy, son to Macduff.

An English Doctor.

A Scoth Doctor.

A Sergeant.

A Porter.

An Old Man.

Lady MACBETH.

Lady MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers, Attendants and Messengers.

Hecate.

Three Witches.

Apparitions.

SCENE: *Scotland; England.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A desert place.*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches.

First Witch. When shall we three meet again in thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch When the *hurlyburly's*[1] done, When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch. That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch. Where the place?

Second Witch. Upon the *heath.*[2]

Third Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch. I come, *Graymalkin!*[3]

Second Witch. *Paddock*[4] calls.

Third Witch. *Anon!*[5]

All. Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover[6] through the fog and filthy air. [*Exeunt*

1. noise and confusion (references to the battle in which Macbeth was engaged)
2. a barren open country
3. the name of a cat
4. the name of a toad witches took the form of animals and other creatures like cats and toads
5. in a moment (I will be ready)
6. let us hover

SCENE II. *A camp near Forres.*

Alarum within. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* Attendants, *meeting a bleeding* Sergeant.

Duncan. What bloody man is that? He can report, As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
The *newest state.*[7]

Malcolm. This is the sergeant,
Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought
'*Gainst my captivity.*[8] Hail, brave friend!
Say to the king the knowledge of the *broil*[9]
As thou didst leave it.

7. latest news

9. battle

8. to prevent my being taken captive

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A desert place*

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch. When are we going to meet again? In thunder, lightning or in rain?

Sec. Witch. We shall meet when the tumult of the battle will cease, and when it has ended in the victory of one side and the defeat of the other.

Third Witch. The battle will be decided before sunset.

First Witch. At what place shall we meet?

Sec. Witch. Let us meet on the barren moorland.

Third Witch. There we shall meet Macbeth.

First Witch. (Hearing the cry of a spirit) I am coming, Graymalkin.

Sec. Witch. (Hearing the call of a spirit) Paddock calls me.

Third Witch. I am coming soon.

All. What is good for others is evil for us, and what others hate as evil, we love. Let us now fly and soar through the foggy air.

SCENE II. *A Camp*

Enter KING DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *with* Attendants, *meeting a bleeding* Sergeant (soldier).

Duncan. Who is this bleeding soldier? From his appearance it seems he is able to inform us of the latest phase of the rebellion.

Malcolm. He is the sergeant, who by fighting bravely and loyally saved me from being captured. (*To the Sergeant*) Welcome, my brave friend; Tell the king what you know of the situation of the battle when you left it.

Sergeant. Doubtful it stood;
As two *spent*[1] swimmers, that do cling together
And *choke their art*.[2] The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to *that*[3]
The multiplying *villanies*[4] of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the *western isles*[5]
Of *kerns*[6] and *gallowglasses*[7] is supplied;
And fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Show'd like a rebel's whore: but all's too weak:
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune,[8] with his brandish'd *steel*,[9]
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour's *minion*[10] carv'd out his passage
Till he faced the slave;
Which ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he *unseam'd*[11] him from the *nave*[12] to the *chaps*,[13]
And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Duncan. O valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Sergeant. As whence the sun *'gins his reflection*[14]
Shipwrecking storms and *direful*[15] thunders break;
So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
Compell'd these *skipping*[16] kerns to trust their heels,
But the Norweyan lord, surveying *vantage*,[17]
With *furbish'd*[18] arms and new supplies of men,
Began a fresh assault.

1. exhausted
2. make each other's skill useless
3. that end, *i.e.*, to be a rebel
4. innumerable qualities of wickedness
5. the Hebrides
6. light-armed troops
7. heavy-armed troops
8. disregarding (the rebel's apparent success)
9. sword
10. favourite
11. ripped (cut) open
12. navel
13. cheeks
14. rises up
15. terrible
16. retiring
17. seeing an opening
18. bright, unused

Sergeant. The issue of the battle was uncertain, like the fate of two swimmers, who, when out of breath, hold and embrace each other, and, thwarting each other's skill, are both in danger of being drowned. The hard-hearted Macdonwald, who is fit indeed to be a traitor,—for all kinds of wickedness have combined in him to that end—is assisted by troops, both light-armed and heavy-armed, from the western isles. And it appeared that he was winning, for fortune appeared to side with him and favour his cause. But all this was of no avail. The heroic Macbeth—well may we call him so—defying Fortune, proceeded forward with his sword reeking with blood, and like the darling of courage, cut his way through the ranks of the enemy, till he came face to face with the villain Macdonwald. He did not lose any time to shake hands with him or bid farewell to him, but cut him open from the navel to the jaws, and then set up his head on the parapets of our castle.

Duncan. My brave kinsman! a worthy gentleman!

Sergeant. As from the east, whence the sun begins his brilliant journey, fierce ship-wrecking tempests and dreadful thunderstorms also break forth, so new dangers started from that source, whence relief had come. Please listen to what followed, O King. As soon as Macbeth, doubly armed with bravery and justice of his cause, beat back the light-armed troops, the king of Norway found his chance, and began a fresh attack with his bright arms and fresh troops.

Duncan. Dismay'd not this
Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Sergeant Yes;
As sparrows, eagles, or the hare the lion.
If I say *sooth.*[1] I must report they were
As cannons *overcharg'd with double cracks*[2]; so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
Or *memorize*[3] another Golgotha,
I cannot tell:—
But I am faint, my *gashes*[4] cry for help.

Duncan. So well thy words become thee as thy wounds;
They smack of honour both. Go get him surgeons.
[*Exit Sergeant, attended.*
Who comes here?

Malcolm. The worthy *thane*[5] of Ross.
Lennox. What a haste looks through his eyes! So should he look
That seems to speak things strange.

Enter Ross.

Ross. God save the king!

Dun. Whence camest thou, worthy thane?
Ross. From Fife, great king;
Where the *Norweyan*[6] banners *flout*[7] the sky
And fan our people cold. Norway himself,
With terrible numbers,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor
The thane of Cawdor, began a *dismal*[8] conflict;
Till that *Bellona's*[9] bridegroom, *lapp'd*[10] in *proof,*[11]
Confronted him with self-comparisons,[12]
Point[13] against *point rebellious,*[14] arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing[15] his *lavish*[16] spirit: and, to conclude,
The victory fell on us.

1. truth
2. filled with charges powerful enough to give a doubly loud report
3. make the place memorable
4. wounds
5. a title nearly equal to Earl
6. Norwegian
7. mock
8. terrible
9. Roman Goddess of war
10. clad
11. *i.e.*, armour which was proof against all blows
12. opposed him with valour equal to his own
13. *i.e.*, the point of his sword
14. the point of the rebel's sword
15. checking
16. insolent

Duncan. Did not the unexpected attack frighten our commanders, Macbeth and Banquo?

Sergeant. Well, it frightened them no more than sparrows frighten eagles, or hares frighten lions. To speak the truth, I am bound to say that they were like cannon loaded with double shot for they delivered blows upon blows upon their enemy. I cannot say—(what they meant by such an act of slaughter)—unless they wanted to bathe in blood flowing from the wounds of the enemy, or make the battlefield as well-known as Golgotha. But I am about to swoon—my wounds must be attended to at once.

Duncan. The report that you have brought does as much credit to you as the wounds you have received in the field. They both testify to your honour. Let him be attended to by surgeons.

[*Exit* Sergeant *with attendants.*

Who comes here?

Malcolm. The noble thane of Ross.

Lennox. His looks show that he is in a great hurry. Such are always the looks of a man who brings strange news.

Enter Ross

Ross. God save the king!

Duncan. Where are you coming from, noble lord?

Ross. I am coming from Fife, O great King, where the banners of the Norwegian King are flying insultingly in the air and chilling the hearts of our people with fear. The king of Norway, at the head of a huge army and assisted by the traitor, the thane of Cawdor, was fighting grimly, and Macbeth, the bridegroom, as it were, of the goddess of war, clad in impregnable armour, met him face to face with equal strength and courage; he opposed the rebel at every point, and, dealing him blow for blow, checked his insolence. To cut short my story, we have won the battle.

Duncan. Great happiness!

Ross. That now
Sweno, the Norways' king, *craves composition*;[1]
Nor would we *deign*[2] him burial of his men
Till he *disbursed*,[3] at Saint Colme's inch,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

Duncan. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest[4]: go pronounce his *present*[5] death,
And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Ross. I'll see it done.

Duncan. What he hath lost noble Macbeth hath won.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Where hast thou been, sister?

Second Witch. Killing swine.

Third Witch. Sister, where thou?

First Witch. A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd:—
"Give me," quoth I:
"*Aroint thee*,[6] witch!" the *rump-fed*[7] *ronyon*[8] cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' the *Tiger*:[9]
But in a sieve I'll thither sail,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do,[10] I'll do, and I'll do.

Second Witch. I'll give thee a wind.

1. begs for terms of peace
2. be kind enough to allow
3. paid
4. the interest we have had most at heart
5. Immediate
6. Begone! stand off!
7. ill-fed
8. scurvy (mean)
9. name of a ship
10. will work mischief for the ship, *i.e.*, gnaw a hole in it

Duncan. Happy news indeed !

Ross. The result was that the King of Norway sued for peace. And we would not permit him to bury the dead bodies of his soldiers, till he had paid down at the island of St. Colme, ten thousand dollars for distribution among our soldiers.

Duncan. No more shall that thane of Cawdor betray my trust. Go and tell him that he is condemned to immediate death, and great Macbeth with the title which he bore (viz., the thane of Cawdor).

Ross. I shall see that your orders are executed.

Duncan. The title that he has lost by his treachery, is won by the noble Macbeth.

[*Exeunt*.

SCENE III. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Where have you been, sisters ?

Sec. Witch. I have been killing pigs.

Third Witch. (*To the First Witch*). Where have you been sister ?

First Witch. A sailor's wife, with chestnuts in her lap, was chewing them with closed lips. When I asked her for some, the fat ugly woman replied, 'Get away, witch'. Her husband who is captain of the vessel, *Tiger*, is gone to Aleppo. I shall go there in a sieve, and then assuming the shape of a tailless rat, I shall gnaw through the rudder, and put him to trouble.

Second Witch. I shall help with a wind.

First Witch. Thou art kind.

Third Witch. And I another.

First Witch. I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they *blow*,[1]
All the *quarters*[2] that they know
I' the *shipman's card*.[3]
I will *drain him*[4] dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his *pent-house lid*;[5]
He shall *live*[6] a man *forbid*:[7]
Weary se'n-nights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, *peak and pine*:[8]
Though his *bark*[9] cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be *tempest-tost*.[10]
Look what I have.

Second Witch. Show me, show me.

First Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
Wreck'd as homeward he did come.
[*Drum within.*

Third Witch. A drum, a drum!
Macbeth doth come.

All. The *weird*[11] sisters, hand in hand,
Posters[12] of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO.

Macbeth. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

1. *i.e.*, blow upon
2. points
3. mariner's compass
4. *i.e.*, drain the blood from his body
5. *i.e.*, his eye-lids
6. *i.e.*, live like
7. under a curse
8. grow lean and waste away
9. ship to and fro
10. tossed by the storm
11. unearthly
12. speedy messengers

First Witch. It will be very kind of you.

Third Witch. I shall give you another wind.

First Witch. I command the rest of the winds. I also control the ports to which the winds blow, and all the directions in the chart of the mariners. I shall drain away all his blood, so as to make him as dry as hay. Sleep shall never visit his sloping eye-lids. He shall live like a man under a curse. For eighty-one weeks he will continue to waste away and shrivel up. Though his ship will not sink, it will be blown about by the winds. See what I have got here.

Sec. Witch. Let me see it.

First Witch. Here I have got the thumb of a ship's pilot, who was wrecked as he was sailing homewards.

[*The sound of a drum is heard.*

Third Witch. I hear the sound of a drum. Macbeth is coming.

All. Let us, three weird sisters (who can travel swiftly on land and sea) dance round in a ring, hand in hand ; let us dance nine times, three rounds for each one of us. The spell is now ready to work.

Enter MACBETH *and* BANQUO

Macbeth. I have never seen so foul a weather following such bright sunshine.

Banquo. How far is't call'd to Forres? What are these
So wither'd, and so wild in their *attire,*[1]
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't? *Live you*[2]? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her *choppy*[3] finger laying
Upon her *skinny*[4] lips: you should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macbeth. Speak, if you can: what are you?

First Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!

Second Witch. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!

Third Witch. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

Banquo. Good sir, why do you start; and seem to fear
Things that do sound so fair? I' the name of truth,
Are ye *fantastical,*[5] or that indeed
Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with *present grace*[6] and great prediction
Of noble having[7] and *of royal hope,*[8]
That he seems *rapt*[9] *withal*[10] to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grain will grow and which will not,
Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
Your favours nor your hate.

1. dress
2. are you living beings
3. chappy, *i.e.*, with clefts or cuts on them
4. thin lips
5. creatures of fancy
6. the noble title which he already bears
7. more noble possession
8. hope of being a king
9. beyond himself (with joy)
10. with it

Banquo. How far is Forres from here? What are these creatures so haggard and so grotesque in their dress? They do not look like earthly creatures, though they are on the earth. Are you living beings? Are you capable of answering questions? You seem to understand my meaning since each one of you put her chapped fingers on her thin lips. You look like women, but your beards prevent me from thinking so.

Macbeth. Speak, if you can. What are you?

First Witch. Welcome Macbeth—Welcome you, who are the thane of Glamis.

Sec. Witch. Welcome Macbeth—Welcome you, who are the thane of Cawdor.

Third Witch. Welcome Macbeth—Welcome you, who shall be king in future.

Banquo. My noble friend, why do you start? Why do you look as though you fear to hear what is so auspicious? (*To the Witches.*) Please tell me truly whether you are merely imaginary beings, or whether you are really that which you appear to be. You have greeted my noble friend with a title which he now possesses; you have predicted for him other honours, and have held out to him the hopes of kingship. And these words of yours have carried him away from himself. And you do not say anything to me. If you can really look into the future and say what will happen, say something about me, for I do not seek your favour nor fear your malice.

First Witch. Hail!
Second Witch. Hail!
Third Witch. Hail!

First Witch. Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

Second Witch. Not so happy, yet much happier.

Third Witch. Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!

First Witch. Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!

Macbeth. Stay, you *imperfect*[1] speakers, tell me more:
By *Sinel's*[2] death I know I am thane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief.[3]
No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
You *owe*[4] this strange *intelligence*[5]? or why
Upon this *blasted*[6] heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting? Speak, I charge you. [*Witches vanish.*

Banquo. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them: whither are they vanish'd?

Macbeth. Into the air; and what seem'd *corporal*[7] melted
As breath into the wind. Would they had stay'd!

1. who speak only a part of what you mean
2. name of Macbeth's father
3. is unbelievable
4. possess
5. news
6. scorched and withered by heat and drought
7. material

First Witch. Welcome, Banquo.

Sec. Witch. Welcome, Banquo.

Third Witch. Welcome, Banquo.

First Witch. You will not be so great as Macbeth, and yet greater.

Sec. Witch. You will not be so fortunate as Macbeth, and yet more fortunate.

Third Witch. You will not be a king yourself, but you will be an ancestor of a line of kings. With these words we greet you, Macbeth and Banquo.

Macbeth. Wait, you imperfect predictors—let me know more. By the death of my father Sinel, I know I am thane of Glamis. But how am I to become the thane of Cawdor ? The present thane of Cawdor is alive, and in prosperous circumstances ; and that I should become the king is also as much beyond the range of belief as that I should be the thane of Cawdor. Tell us how you have got this strange information. Or why do you intercept us here on this blasted moor with these prophetic greetings ? Speak, I command you.

(*Witches vanish.*)

Banquo. The earth has bubbles just like water, and these are like the bubbles of the earth. Where are they gone ?

Macbeth. Into the air ; and what appeared to be their bodies has dissolved away as breath dissolves in the air. I wish they had stopped.

Banquo. Were such things here as we do speak about?
Or have we eaten on the *insane root*[1]
That *takes the reason prisoner*[2]?

Macbeth. Your children shall be kings.

Banquo. You shall be king.

Macbeth. And thane of Cawdor too: went it not so?

Banquo. *To the selfsame tune and words.*[3] Who's here?

Enter ROSS *and* ANGUS.

Ross. The king hath happily received, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal *venture*[4] in the rebels' fight,
His *wonders*[5] and his *praises*[6] do contend.
Which should be thine or his: silenc'd with that,
In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
He finds thee in the *stout*[7] Norweyan ranks
Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
Strange images of death. As thick as hail
Came *post with post,*[8] and every one did bear
Thy *praises*[9] in his kingdom's great defence,
And pour'd them down before him.

Angus. We are sent
To give thee from our royal master thanks;
Only to *herald*[10] thee into his *sight,*[11]
Not pay thee.

Ross. And, for *an earnest*[12] of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
In which *addition,*[13] hail most worthy thane!
For it is thine.

1. root causing insanity or madness
2. renders is useless
3. that was its exact import
4. daring exploit
5. sense of wonder (at your bravery)
6. appreciation (of your brave exploits)
7. brave
8. messenger after messenger
9. the praises of your deeds
10. conduct you by proclaiming your arrival
11. presence
12. assurance
13. title

Banquo. Were they really here—those creatures that we are talking about ? Or have we eaten some root that deprives one of sense and judgment ?

Macbeth. Your descendants shall be kings of Scotland.

Banquo. You shall be king yourself.

Macbeth. And I shall also bè thane of Cawdor. Was this not their prediction ?

Banquo. Exactly. Who comes here ?

Enter ROSS *and* ANGUS

Ross. Macbeth, the King was highly delighted with the news of your victory, and when he was informed of your heroic courage in the fight he was torn between two feelings—his wonder at your brave exploits, and his desire to reward them with just praise. By reason of this conflict in his mind, he remained tongue-tied. Then while, reviewing the rest of the incidents that took place on that day, he imagines you fighting your way through the brave Norwegian soldiers—not in the least afraid of the heaps of dead bodies in the battlefield. Like hailstones in a shower, came in quick succession messenger after messenger, and each was loud in praise of your gallant defence of the realm ; and all these praises were communicated to the King.

Angus. We have been sent by the king to thank you on his behalf. It is our business to conduct you to his presence, not to reward you for your great heroism.

Ross. And as an indication of a greater honour, the king has commanded me to confer on you the title of the thane of Cawdor. And I now greet you with this title, for it is yours.

Banquo. [*Aside*] What, can the devil speak true?

Macb. The thane of Cawdor lives: why do you dress me
In borrow'd robes?

Angus. Who was the thane lives *yet*[1];
But under *heavy judgment*[2] bears that life
Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combined
With those of Norway, or did *line*[3] the rebel
With *hidden help and vantage*,[4] or that with both
He labour'd *in*[5] his country's *wreck*,[6] I know not;
But treasons *capital*,[7] confess'd and proved,
Have *overthrown*[8] him.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Glamis, and thane of Cawdor!
The greatest is behind.—[*To Ross and Angus*] Thanks for your pains.—
[*To Banquo*] Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me
Promised no less to them?

Banquo. *That*,[9] trusted *home*,[10]
Might yet *enkindle you unto the crown*,[11]
Beside the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The *instruments of darkness*[12] tell us truths,
Win[13] *us* with *honest trifles*,[14] to *betray's*[15]
In *deepest consequence*.[16]
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

1. still
2. heavy sentence passed upon him
3. strengthen
4. secret help and the advantage that was due to it
5. towards
6. ruin
7. *i.e.*, against the king
8. brought him to destruction
9. *i.e.*, that prediction
10. to the utmost
11. inspire you with a hope of obtaining the crown
12. the agents of evil
13. *i.e.*, win our confidence
14. trivial matters in which they deal with us honestly
15. deceive us
16. *i.e.*, matters of deepest consequence

Banquo. What, can the devil speak truth ?

Macbeth. The thane of Cawdor is alive ; why do you greet me with a title that belongs to another ?

Angus. The man who was the thane is indeed alive ; but his life is rightly forfeited, for he is under the sentence of death. I do not know whether he was in league with Norway, or whether he offered to give the traitor Macdonwald secret help, or whether he conspired with both to bring about the ruin of his country. But acts of treason have been confessed by him and proved against him, and so he is now under the sentence of death.

Macbeth. (*Aside*) So I am thane of Glamis and thane of Cawdor. The greatest is still to come. (*To Ross and Angus*) I thank you for the trouble you have taken for me. [*To Banquo*] Do you not hope that your descendents shall be kings, seeing that the prediction of the witches that I would be thane of Cawdor has been fulfilled.

Banquo. Their prediction, fully believed, would excite in you a longing for the crown, in addition to the thaneship of Cawdor. But it is certainly strange. It very often happens that in order to instigate us to evil, the agents of the devil tell us truths, and by winning our confidence in small matters, they deceive us in matters of vital consequence [*To Ross and Angus*]. Cousins, I would like to have a few words with you in private.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the *swelling*[1] act
Of the *imperial theme*[2]—I thank you, gentleman.—
[*Aside*] This supernatural *soliciting*[3]
Cannot be ill; cannot be good: if ill,
Why hath it given me *earnest*[4] of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that *suggestion*[5]
Whose *horrid image*[6] doth unfix my hair,
And make my *seated*[7] heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? *Present fears*[8]
Are less than *horrible imaginings*:[9]
My thought, *whose murder yet is but fantastical*,[10]
Shakes so my *single*[11] *state of man*[12] that *function*[14]
Is smother'd in *surmise*[13] and nothing is
But what is not.

Banquo Look, how our partner's rapt.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.[15]

Banquo. New honours come upon him,
Like our strange garments, *cleave not to their mould*[16]
But with the aid of use.

Macbeth. [*Aside*] Come what come may,
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

1. grand
2. the drama of imperial power
3. inciting
4. promise
5. temptation
6. dreadful thought
7. firmly set
8. actual dangers
9. terrors created by the imagination
10. in which murder has not yet got beyond the stage of mere imagination
11. weak
12. manhood
13. power of action
14. speculation fancies
15. without any action on my part
16. do not fit

Macbeth. (*Speaking to himself*). Two predictions have proved true—they are like fortunate preludes to the great fortune that is in store for me —*viz*, my accession to the throne. [*To Ross and Angus*] I thank you, gentlemen. [*Again aside*] This incitement by the supernatural creatures cannot be evil nor altogether good. If it were evil, how has it given me the promise of success by a prediction that has been fulfilled, for I am thane of Cawdor. If it were good, why should I yield to a vile suggestion—*viz.*, of murdering Duncan? The very thought of that crime makes my hair stand on its end, and causes my firmly-placed heart to beat against my side in a most unnatural way. The actual presence of fear is not so horrible as the frightful fancies in the imagination. My thought, in which murder exists only in a fanciful shape, unnerves me to such an extent that all my practical energies seem to be paralysed, and all that actually exists around me appears to be unreal.

Banquo. See how our comrade is lost in thought.

Macbeth. (*Aside*) If I am destined to be king, I shall be king all right without any effort on my part.

Banquo. New dignities which he has acquired seem to have upset him, for new honours are like new clothes which do not fit a man till they are used for some time.

Macbeth. (*Aside*) Let what happen happen; even if the worst comes to the worst, time will bring a change and the worst will draw to an end.

Banquo. Worthy Macbeth we stay upon your leisure.

Macb. Give me your *favour*[1] : my dull brain was *wrought*[2].
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd *where*[3] every day I turn
The leaf to read them. *Let us toward*[4] the king.
[*To Banquo*] Think upon what hath chanced ; and, at more time,
The interim[5] having weigh'd it, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Banquo. Very gladly.

Macbeth. Till then, enough.—Come, friends.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Forres. The palace.*

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX, *and* Attendants.

Duncan. Is execution done on Cawdor ? Are not
Those *in commission*[6] yet return'd ?

Malcolm. My *liege*,[7]
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die : who did report
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons,
Implored your highness's pardon, and set forth
A deep repentance : nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it ; he died
As one that had been *studied*[8] in his death
To throw away the *dearest thing he owed*[9],
As 'twere a *careless*[10] trifle.

1. pardon
2. upset
3. *i.e.*, in my memory
4. let us go toward the king
5. the meantime
6. those charged with the duty of carrying Cawdor's execution
7. lord
8. trained in the art of dying
9. the most precious thing he possessed, *i.e.*, his life
10. worthless

Banquo. Noble Macbeth, we are ready to resume our journey as soon as it pleases you.

Macbeth. Please pardon me. My mind was disturbed by memories of long-forgotten things. [*To Ross and Angus*] Dear friends, I shall remember the trouble that you have taken for me ; it is recorded in my memory and I shall turn to it every day. Let us go to the king. (*To Banquo*) Please think over what has happened today, and at some future time when we shall have more leisure and when we shall have considered the matter, we shall meet again and speak out our thoughts frankly to each other.

Banquo. Very gladly.

Macbeth. Till then we need not talk about it ; what we have spoken is enough. Come away, friends.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Forres. The Palace.*

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENNOX *and* ATTENDANTS.

Duncan. Has the thane of Cawdor been executed, have not those officers come back who were entrusted with this task ?

Mal. My lord, they have not yet come back. But I have talked with a person who was present at his execution and saw him die. He reported to me that Cawdor frankly confessed his treason, begged your Majesty's pardon, and expressed his sincere repentance. Nothing that he had done in life did so much credit to him as the bravery that he showed in facing death. He died like a man who had prepared himself to meet death, to throw away his life, which was his most valued possession, as though it were a worthless thing.

Duncan. There's no art
To find the mind's construction[1] in the face :
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS, *and* ANGUS.

O worthiest cousin !
The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me : thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of *recompense*[2] is slow
To overtake thee. Would thou hadst less deserved,
That the *proportion*[3] both of thanks and *payment*[4]
Might have been mine ! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay.

Macbeth. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, *pays itself.*[5] Your highness's part
Is to receive our duties ; and our duties
Are to your throne and state children and servants ;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour.

Duncan. Welcome hither :
I *have begun to plant thee*[6], and will labour
To make thee full *of growing*[7]. Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserved, nor must be known
No less to have done so ; let me *infold*[8] thee
And hold thee to my heart.

Banquo. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

1. to interpret the mind
2. reward
3. the right proportion
4. reward
5. is a reward in itself
6. sown the seeds of your greatness
7. highest degree of greatness
8. embrace

Dun. There is no means of finding a man's true character from the expression of his face. He was a gentleman in whom I placed absolute confidence.

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSS *and* ANGUS.

Dun. My noble cousin I was just now feeling conscious of my ingratitude; your services are so great that I cannot adequately reward them. I wish you deserved less so that there might be a just proportion between the reward merited by you and that which is bestowed upon you. As matters stand, I have only this to add that you deserve more than all that I can ever give you.

Macbeth. The loyal service which I am bound to render to you rewards itself in the very doing of it (*i.e.*, my loyal service is its own reward). As you are our king, it is your part to receive our services, and as subjects we are bound to serve you in the same manner as children serve their parents or as servants serve their masters. And in performing this loyal service we only perform that which we are bound to do.

Dun. You are welcome here. By making you thane of Cawdor I have only given you a start and shall try to raise you to greater dignities. (*Turning to Banquo*) Worthy Banquo, you have deserved equally well, and it must be known to all that you have done so; therefore, let me embrace you and clasp you to my bosom.

Banquo. If I prosper in your affection, I shall use my high position only to serve you.

Duncan. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness[1], seek to hide themselves
In *drops of sorrow*[2]. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our *estate*[3] upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But *signs of nobleness*[4], like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macbeth. The *rest*[5] is labour, which is not *used for you*[6]:
I'll be myself the *harbinger*[7], and make joyful
The hearing of my wife *with*[8] your approach:
So humbly take my leave

Duncan. My worthy Cawdor!

Macb. [*Aside*] The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step,
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at[9] the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*

Duncan. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant,
And *in his commendations*[10] I am fed;
It is a *banquet*[11] to me. Let's after him,
Whose *care*[12] is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

1. quite unrestrained
2. tears
3. succession to the throne
4. distinguishing marks of honour
5. repose
6. devoted to your service
7. forerunner
8. *i.e.*, with tidings of your approach
9. let the eye seem not to see
10. in hearing him commended or praised
11. feast (of enjoyment)
12. *i.e.*, care for my welfare

Dun. I am so happy, so exceedingly delighted that I can give vent to my emotion only by shedding tears. Sons, kinsmen, nobles, and you who are nearest to me in rank and relationship, I hereby announce that I appoint my eldest son, Malcolm as my successor to the throne, who shall henceforth be called Prince of Cumberland. But this honour will not be conferred upon him alone : all those who deserved will be invested with new honours and titles. (*To Macbeth*) From here let us go to Inverness where I shall place myself under further obligation to you.

Macbeth. The leisure which I do not spend in your service is like hard labour to me. I must go myself and carry this message which will gladden the heart of my wife. So I humbly beg your permission to leave.

Dun. My noble thane of Cawdor.

Macbeth (*To himself*). The king has named his son the Prince of Cumberland—this is an obstacle to my progress, and I must either stumble upon it or get over it. Let the stars hide their lights ; let not my dark and wicked designs come to light ; let the eye shut itself and not see the work of the hand ; yet let the deed be done though the eyes would shrink from seeing it after it is done.

[*Exit*

Dun. It is true, noble Banquo ; he is indeed most courageous, and I am pleased to hear you praise him so highly. Your commendation of Macbeth is like a delicious feast to me. Let us follow him to Inverness ; in his anxiety to provide for our comfort, he has gone before us. He is indeed a most virtuous kinsman. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Inverness.* MACBETH'S *castle.*

Enter LADY MACBETH, *reading a letter.*

Lady Macbeth. "They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report, they have more in them than *mortal*[1] knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came *missives*[2] from the king, who all-hailed me 'Thane of Cawdor'; by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with 'Hail, king that shalt be!' This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the *dues*[3] of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell."

Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promised: yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the *milk of human kindness*[4]
To catch the nearest way: thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition, but without
The *illness*[5] *should attend it*[6]: what thou wouldst highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win: thou'ldst have, great Glamis,
That which cries "Thus thou must do, if thou have it";
And that which rather thou dost fear to do

1. human
2. messengers
3. right
4. mildness, tenderness
5. wickedness
6. *i.e.*, which should attend it

SCENE V. *Inverness.* MACBETH'S *Castle.*
Enter LADY MACBETH *reading a letter.*

Lady Macbeth. " The witches met me on the way on the day. I won the victory ; and I understand from reliable report that they possess deeper knowledge than men can acquire. When I was eager to put further questions to them, they vanished into air. While I stood amazed at their disappearance, messengers arrived from the king, greeting me as thane of Cawdor, a title by which the weird sisters had addressed me ; and they had also predicted that I would be king. I have considered it proper to acquaint you with them, for you are my partner in any greatness that I might reach. And so I did not like that you should be deprived of the joy of anticipation and should remain ignorant of what great honour you are to share with me. Think over this matter deeply, and so for the present farewell."

You are already thane of Glamis and of Cawdor, and *shall* be king, as the witches have predicted. Yet I am afraid of your weak character ; you are too tender to take the shortest cut to success. You no doubt desire to be great—you are not without ambition ; but you have not got that unscrupulousness which should go with ambition. Whatever greatness you would like to achieve, you would achieve by honest means. You would not employ foul means, and yet would win that which is wrong to win. O great thane of Glamis, you are eager to win that (*viz.*, the crown), which requires bold action on your part to be won ; but you are afraid

Than wishest should be undone. *Hie*[1] thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the *golden round*,[2]
Which fate and *metaphysical*[3] aid doth seem
To have thee crown'd withal.

Enter a Messenger.

What is your tidings?

Messenger. The king comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Thou'rt mad to say it:
Is not thy master with him? who, were't so,
Would have inform'd *for*[4] preparation.

Messenger. So please you, it is true: our thane is coming:
One of my fellows had the *speed*[5] of him;
Who, almost dead *for*[6] breath, had scarcely more
Than would make up his message.

Lady Macbeth. *Give him tending*;[7]
He brings great news. [*Exit Messenger.*
The *raven*[8] himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to *remorse*,[9]
That no *compunctious visitings of nature*[10]
Shake my *fell*[11] purpose, nor keep peace between

1. hasten
2. crown
3. supernatural
4. *i.e.*, for the purpose of
5. start of
6. *i.e.*, for want of breath
7. attend to him
8. *i.e.*, the messenger
9. pity
10. natural pricking of conscience
11. horrible

of doing it yourself, though you would wish it to be done. Come quickly to me, so that I may infuse into you my courage and firmness, and drive away by bold words all your scruples, that stand in the way of your seizing the crown, to which you are destined by fate and supernatural agents.

Enter a Messenger.

What news do you bring ?

Mess. The king comes here tonight.

Lady Macb. Have you gone mad that you are saying so ? (*Collecting herself.*) Is not your master with the king ? If the king were really coming, he would certainly have sent word to me to make necessary arrangements for receiving him.

Mess. If it pleases your ladyship, it is true. Our master is coming. One of my fellow-servants rode ahead of him so speedily that he is almost dead for want of breath, and has delivered his message with the greatest difficulty.

Lady Macb. Look after him. He has brought most important news.

[*Exit* Messenger.

The raven, that announces the fateful entrance of Duncan into my castle, has a most hoarse voice. Let the powers of evil, that inspire murderous thought, come to me and drive away all womanly tenderness from my heart and fill me entirely with the most dreadful cruelty ; let them make my blood thick, and close the gates of pity, so that no tender scruple of conscience divert me from my cruel design or prevent the execution of my purpose. O spirits of evil, who are the agents of murder, come to me

The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And *take my milk for*[1] *gall*,[2] you *murdering ministers*,[3]
Wherever in your *sightless substances*[4]
You wait on *nature's mischief*![5] Come, thick night,
And *pall thee in the dunnest*[6] smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry "Hold, hold!"

Enter MACBETH.

Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters *have transported me beyond*[7]
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macbeth. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady Macbeth. And when goes hence?

Macbeth. To-morrow, as he proposes.

Lady Macbeth. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!
Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
May read strange matters: *to beguile the time*,[8]
Look like the time[9]; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
Must be *provided for*[10]: and you shall put
This night's great business *into my dispatch*;[11]
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give *solely sovereign sway*[12] and masterdom.

1. change it into
2. spite or malignity
3. ministers of murder
4. invisible forms
5. human inclination to mischief
6. put on a cloak of the darkest
7. have carried me beyond, *i.e.*, have enabled me to see the future
8. to deceive the world
9. look as the world looks
10. *i.e.*, murdered
11. under my management
12. to us alone imperial power

and take away the milk from my breasts and put poison in its place ; come away from the place where you may be now, prompting the evils of the world in invisible forms. Let dark night also come, and wrap itself in the thickest smoke of hell, so that I may not see the wound that my sharp knife may make, nor the gods look through the canopy of darkness and bid me stop.

Enter Macbeth

Great thane of Glamis ! Noble thane of Cawdor ! Greater than both, for you are destined to royal dignity. Your letters have carried me away from the present (when the future is unknown) ; and I already feel at this very instant the future greatness that is in store for us.

Macbeth. My dearest wife, King Duncan comes here tonight.

Lady Macbeth. And when does he propose to go ?

Macbeth. Tomorrow, as he intends.

Lady Mach. O, that tomorrow shall never come. My lord, your face betrays the anxious thoughts that are in your mind. In order to deceive people, assume looks that you ought to assume at such a time ; let your looks, words and behaviour bid welcome to all ; look as innocent as a flower, but be like a serpent that is hidden in it. We must make necessary preparations for the person who is coming here tonight, and you must entrust to me the great work of this night. And if this work is performed successfully, we shall be able to enjoy sovereign authority for the rest of our lives.

Macbeth. We will speak further.

Lady Macbeth. Only look up clear ;
To alter favour ever is to fear :
Leave all the rest to me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Before* MACBETH'S *castle.*

Hautboys. Servants of MACBETH *attending, with torches.*

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO, LENNOX, MACDUFF, ROSS, ANGUS, *and* Attendants.

Duncan. This castle hath a pleasant *seat* ;[1] the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

Banquo. This *guest of summer*,[2]
The temple-haunting *martlet*,[3] does approve,
By *his loved mansionry*[4], that the heavens' breath
Smells *wooingly*[5] here : no *jutty*,[6] *frieze*,[7]
Buttress,[8] nor *coign of vantage*,[9] but this bird
Hath made his *pendent*[10] bed and *procreant*[11] cradle :
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Duncan. See, see, our honour'd hostess !
The love that follows us sometime is *our trouble*,[12]
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid *God 'ild*[13] us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

1. situation
2. *i.e.*, martlet
3. a kind of swallow
4. favourite abode
5. invitingly
6. ledge
7. cornice
8. projecting support to a wall
9. convenient corner
10. hanging
11. the cradle for its family
12. a cause of trouble to us
13. *i.e.*, God yield us or reward us

Macbeth. We shall talk further on this matter.

Lady Macb. Only do not look so troubled. To change countenance is always a sign that one is afraid. You only do not betray yourself by your looks ; I shall look to everything else.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Before Macbeth's Castle.*

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, ETC.

Duncan. The castle is charmingly situated ; the wind that blows here is pleasant and delicious, and has a soothing effect on our mind.

Banquo. The house-martin that visits our country in summer and loves to dwell in churches, has built its nest here—a fact that shows that the wind that blows here is pure and sweet. There is no projection, no cornice, no support to a wall, no convenient corner, where the bird has not built its hanging nest to breed its young ones in. I have noticed that the air is sweet, wherever these birds flock and have their nests.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Dun. See, here comes our honoured hostess The love that urges us to visit our friends, is sometimes the occasion of trouble to them, but still we feel grateful for the affection which is shown to us. So, you will thank us and pray God to bless us for the trouble we are giving you, for it springs from our love for you.

Lady Macbeth. All our service
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business to contend
Against those honours deep and broad wherewith
Your majesty loads our house : for those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your *hermits.*[1]

Duncan. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We *coursed him at the heels,*[2] and had a purpose
To be his purveyor :[3] but he rides well ;
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath *holp*[4] him
To his home before us Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, *in compt,*[5]
To *make their audit*[6] at your highness's pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Duncan. Give me your hand ;
Conduct me to mine host ; we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. [*Exeunt.*

1. beadsmen, *i.e.*, bound to pray for you
2. followed him closely at his heels
3. *i.e.*, to inform you of his coming
4. helped
5. accountable
6. give their account

Lady Macb. All the service that we might render to you, even if it were doubled over and over again, would be poor and inadequate, when matched with the great honour, which you are conferring on our family. We are deeply obliged to you for all the honours you have bestowed upon us now as well as in the past.

Dun. Where is the thane of Cawdor? We followed him close, and had wished to reach his house before him. But he rides fast, and his great love for us has acted as a spur to help him to reach his home before us. Fair and noble hostess, we are your guests tonight.

Lady Macb. We are ever your servants, and we place ourselves and all that belongs to us at your disposal whenever you will choose to require our service, and in rendering this service, we shall be returning to you what really belongs to you.

Duncan. Allow me to shake hands with you; take me to your husband. We hold him in high esteem and shall continue to bestow favours on him. With your permission, kind hostess.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. MACBETH'S *castle.*

Hautboys and torches. Enter a Sewer, *and divers* Servants *with dishes and service, and pass over the stage. Then enter* MACBETH.

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well
It were done quickly : if the assassination
Could *trammel up the consequence,*[1] and catch,
With his *surcease,*[2] success ; that but *this blow*[3]
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here,[4] upon this *bank and shoal of time,*[5]
We'ld jump[6] the life to come. But in these cases
We still *have judgment*[7] here ; *that*[8] we but teach
Bloody instructions,[9] which being taught return
To plague the inventor : this even-handed justice
Commends[10] the *ingredients*[11] of our *poison'd chalice*[12]
To our own lips. He's here in *double trust* :[13]
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed ; then, as his host,
Who should against his murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek,[14] hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against
The *deep damnation of his taking-off* :[15]
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast,[16] or heaven's *cherubin,*[17] horsed

1. entangle the consequence within its own net, *i.e.*, had no consequences
2. death
3. this act (of assassination)
4. in this life only
5. this life which is a shallow sandbank to the ocean of eternity
6. risk
7. are sentenced
8. so that
9. the performance of murderous acts
10. Presents or offers
11. contents
12. cup which we poison for others
13. twofold guarantee of security
14. has been so gentle in the exercise of his power
15. the guilt of his murder deserving severest torment in hell
16. riding upon the storm
17. angel

Scene VII. *Macbeth's Castle.*

Enter Macbeth.

Macbeth. If the murder of Duncan came to a finish as soon as the blow was struck, and no consequence arose out of it, then it would be well to do it quickly. If the murder were a self-contained act, complete in itself, and were not followed by any dreadful result in this life, if it could secure success with Duncan's death, if this act of murder ended in itself without giving rise to a series of consequences —then standing, as I do, on the shore of this worldly life, I am prepared to risk the punishment in the next life. But in such cases of murder, there is the risk of punishment even in this world, for we set examples to others, and the lesson of murder we teach, turns back upon our head. Thus, impartial justice offers to us the cup of poison, that we prepared for others. Duncan is here with a double claim to security—first, I am his relative and subject, and each of these facts is a strong argument against murder; secondly, I am his host, and I should rather protect him against every murderous design than murder him myself. Moreover, this Duncan has exercised his royal powers so kindly and has been such a good and perfect ruler, that his virtues like angels will loudly condemn the sin of his murder. And there will be felt universal pity for him; in fact, pity, like a pure spotless baby or

Upon the *sightless couriers*[1] of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That[2] tears shall drown the wind. I have no spur
To prick the sides of my *intent*,[3] but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the *other*.[4]

Enter LADY MACBETH.

How now ! what news ?

Lady Macbeth. He has almost supp'd : why have you left the chamber ?

Macbeth. Hath he ask'd for me ?

Lady Macbeth. Know you not he has ?

Macbeth. We will proceed no further in this business :
He hath honour'd me of late ; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which *would be*[5] worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady Macbeth. Was the hope drunk
Wherein you dress'd yourself ? hath it slept since ?
And wakes it now, to look so *green and pale*[6]
At what it did so freely ? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou *afeard*[7]
To be the same in thine own act and valour
As thou art in desire ? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "*I dare not*"[8] wait upon "*I would*,"[9]
Like the poor cat i' the *adage* ?[10]

1. invisible winds
2. so that
3. purpose
4. *i.e.*, other side
5. should be
6. *i.e.*, with fear
7. afraid
8. *i.e.*, your fear
9. *i.e.*, your desire
10. proverb

like an angel of heaven riding the air, will carry the news of this horrible deed to every person, and bring tears to every eye. I have nothing to urge me on to the deed, but my inordinate ambition which may ultimately bring ruin upon me.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

Well, what's the matter ?

Lady M. The King has almost finished his supper. Why did you leave the chamber ?

Mac. Did he enquire about me ?

Lady M. Yes, he did.

Mac. We shall not proceed any further in this business. He has recently conferred new honours upon me, and I have won the esteem of all sections of my countrymen. I would rather enjoy those honours (which are so fresh and bright) than throw them away so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope (of getting possession of the throne) which you cherished so eagerly, merely a drunkard's fancy ? Has it now worn off, as the fancy of a drunkard wears off after a spell of sleep ? And do you now shudder and turn pale at the plans and preparations that were made so freely to fulfil that hope ? Henceforth I shall regard your love as fickle as a drunkard's whim. Are you afraid to be as resolute in your action as you are in your desire to secure the throne ? Would you wish to have the crown which you consider to be the glory of your life, and remain a coward in your own estimation ? Would you behave like the cat in the proverb and let your fear prevent you from doing that which you so desire ?

Macbeth. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady Macbeth. What beast was't then,
That made you *break*[1] this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then *adhere*,[2] and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this.

Macbeth. If we should fail?

Lady Macbeth. We fail!
But screw your courage to the *sticking-place*,[3]
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep—
Whereto[4] the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him—his two *chamberlains*[5]
Will I with wine and *wassail*[6] *so convince*,[7]
That memory, the *warder*[8] of the brain,
Shall be a fume,[9] and the *receipt*[10] of reason
A *limbeck*[11] only: when in swinish sleep
Their drenched natures lie as in a death,

1. disclose
2. were then favourable
3. to the point at which it will remain unmoved
4. *i.e.*, to sleep
5. officers of his chamber
6. carousing
7. overpower
8. guardian
9. shall be fogged (confused)
10. receptacle
11. a vessel for distilling

Mac. I beg you, stop. I am bold enough to do all that befits a man. One who could dare to do more than I do, is not a man.

Lady M. If this act is not fit for man, what beast induced you to suggest it to me? When you had the courage to do it, you were really a man; and you would be more than a man, if you could actually do it now. At that time, both the time and the place were lacking, and you were then resolved to create opportunity. And now that opportunity has presented itself, you are feeling nervous. (Is it anything but cowardice?) I have suckled a child at may breast, and I know what it is to love a child. But I could, even as it was smiling at me, tear it away from my breast and dash its brains against the wall, if I were to take a vow, as you did to murder Duncan.

Mac. But what if we were to fail?

Lady M. Why should we fail? Stick to your determination firmly, and we cannot fail. When Duncan is asleep—and he will sleep very soundly after his fatiguing journey—I shall so overpower his attendants with drink and merriment that their memory, which keeps guard over the mind, will be filled with fume, and their reason thrown into complete disorder. When they would sleep like pigs,

What cannot you and I perform upon
The unguarded Duncan ? what not *put upon*[1]
His *spongy*[2] officers, who shall bear the guilt
Of our great *quell* ?[3]

Macbeth. Bring forth men-children only ;
For thy undaunted *mettle*[4] should compose
Nothing but males. Will it not be received,
When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
Of his own chamber, and used their very daggers,
That they have done't ?

Lady Macbeth. Who dares receive it other,
As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
Upon his death ?

Macbeth. I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent[5] to this terrible feat.
Away, and mock the time with fairest show :
False face must hide what the false heart doth know. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *Inverness. Court of* MACBETH'S *castle*

Enter BANQUO, *and* FLEANCE *bearing a torch before him.*

Banquo. *How goes the night,*[6] boy ?

Fleance. The moon is down ; I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I *take't,*[7] 'tis later, sir.

1. falsely ascribe to
2. soaked with wine
3. *i.e.*, murder
4. courage
5. every part of my body
6. what time is it ?
7. I think

what cannot we do on the unguarded king ? What blame can we not put upon the drunken servants, who will bear the guilt of the crime committed by us ?

Mac. O brave woman, you should give birth only to boys, for your brave spirit should breed nothing but males. And when we have marked with blood those sleeping servants and used their own daggers to kill them, will it not be believed by people that it was they who did it ?

Lady M. Who would dare to take it otherwise, when we shall fill the air with our loud cries and lamentations ?

Mac. I am resolved, and brace up my nerves and sinews to this terrible deed. Come away, deceive all with fair looks, for a false appearance must hide the falsehood that is in the heart.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Court of Macbeth's Castle.*

Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE, *bearing a torch before him.*

Ban. What time of night is it, my son ?

Fleance. I am not sure, for the moon has set, and I have not heard the clock.

Ban. The moon sets at twelve.

Fle. I think it is later than midnight.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's *husbandry*[1] in heaven,
Their candles are all out. Take thee *that*[2] too
A heavy *summons*[3] lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep. Merciful powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose! Give me my sword.
Who's there?

Enter MACBETH *and a* Servant *with a torch.*

Macbeth. A friend.

Banquo. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great *largess*[4] to your *offices*[5]
This diamond he greets your wife withal,
By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up
In measureless content.

Macbeth. Being unprepared,
Our will *became the servant to*[6] *defect*;[7]
Which *else should free have wrought.*[8]

Banquo. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.

Macbeth. I think not of them:
Yet, *when we can entreat an hour to serve*[9],
We would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

1. economy
2. a shield or helmet
3. inclination to sleep
4. a liberal gift of money
5. servants
6. has been limited by
7. deficiencies
8. otherwise would have had free play
9. when we can possibly find an hour's leisure

Ban. Wait, take this sword of mine. There is economy practised at heaven, for all the candles (stars) of the sky have been extinguished. Take this also (*giving Fleance a part of his armour*). Sleep lies heavy like lead upon my eyes, and yet I would not like to sleep. O kind gods, help me to keep out from my mind the evil thoughts that get possession of the mind during sleep.

Enter MACBETH *and a* SERVANT *with a torch.*

Give me my sword. Who is there?

Macb. A friend.

Ban. What, sir, you are not yet in bed? The king has retired. He has been exceedingly pleased, and has ordered a large sum of money to be distributed among your servants. He presents this diamond to your wife, who has been such a kind hostess to him. Now he has retired to his chamber with great joy and satisfaction.

Macb. As we were not prepared for this great reception, our entertainment, in spite of our best instructions, was very defective; if we had more time for preparation, we would have given a more fitting reception to the king.

Ban. Never mind—everything is all right. I dreamt of the three witches last night. Their predictions have proved true to some extent in your case.

Macb. I do not think of them. Yet when we have an hour's leisure, we shall talk upon that matter, if you will kindly spare so much of your time.

Banquo. At your kind'st leisure.
Macbeth. If you shall *cleave to my consent*[1], *when 'tis,*[2]
It shall make honour for you.
Banquo. *So*[3] I lose none
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My *bosom*[4] *franchised*[5] and *allegiance*[6] *clear*[7],
I shall be counsell'd.
Macbeth. Good repose the while!
Banquo. Thanks, sir: the like to you!
[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*
Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,
She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.
[*Exit Servant.*
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight?[8] or art thou but
A *dagger of the mind,*[9] a false creation,
Proceeding from the *heat-oppressed*[10] brain?
I see thee yet, in form as *palpable*[11]
As this which now I draw.
Thou *marshall'st*[12] me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still;
And on thy blade and *dudgeon*[13] *gouts*[14] of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to[15] mine eyes. Now o'er the one half-world

1. abide by my counsel
2. when the time arrives
3. provided that
4. conscience
5. free
6. loyalty
7. irreproachable
8. able to be felt as well as seen
9. imaginary dagger
10. troubled with heated fancies
11. substancial
12. lead
13. handle
14. thick drops
15. creates the vision

pure hallucination Macbeth's terrific imagination ... alive to the serious[ness] of the crime

Macbeth has a poet's imagination.

Ban. Whenever it will be convenient for you, I am at your service.

Macb. If you join me in my plans, when I have formed them, you will win more honours.

Ban. I am prepared to follow you, provided that, in trying to attain greater honour, I do not do anything dishonourable, and I keep my conscience clear, and my loyalty untarnished.

Macb. I wish you perfect rest in the meantime.

Ban. Thanks, sir. I wish the same to you.

[*Exeunt Banquo and Fleance.*

Macb. (*To the Servant*) Go tell your mistress to ring the bell when my drink is ready.

[*Exit Servant.*

Is this a real dagger that I see hanging before me with its handle near to my hand? Let me catch hold of it. I cannot, and yet I see it there. It is a mere vision of a deadly weapon? Is it not perceptible to the touch as it is to sight? Or is it a mere hallucination, an outcome of the excited fancy? There I see it still, in shape as clear as this dagger which I am now drawing. It leads me on the way I was going and it is like the weapon that I was going to use. [Either it exists or it does not exist]. If it does not exist then my eyes are deceived, and are therefore more foolish than other senses; but if it does exist, then my eyes see correctly, and are therefore more reliable than my other senses. I still see it, and on its blade and hilt are marks of

Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams *abuse*[1]
The *curtain'd sleep*;[2] witchcraft celebrates
Pale *Hecate's*[3] offerings; and *wither'd*[4] murder,
Alarum'd[5] by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's *his watch*,[6] thus with his stealthy pace,
With *Tarquin's ravishing strides*,[7] towards his design
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives. [*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady Macbeth. That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold;
What hath *quench'd*[8] them hath given me fire
Hark! Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the *surfeited grooms*[9]
Do mock their charge with snores: I have *drugg'd*[10] their *possets*,[11]
That[12] death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

1. tempt to evil
2. *i.e.*, the sleeper on his curtained bed
3. the goddess of witchcraft
4. gaunt-looking
5. awakened
6. tells him the progress of the night
7. steps with which Tarquin made his way to Lucretia's bed with the object of ravishing her
8. stupified
9. drunken chamberlains
10. mixed with wine
11. evening drink
12. so that

blood which were not there before. No, the dagger does not really exist—it is only a vision which the bloody work I have in hand has called up before my eyes. Now over half the world all living creatures are asleep, and evil dreams disturb the mind of the sleeper; the witches practise their infernal rites to Hecate, and the pale murderer, summoned by the cries of the wolf (which seems to inform him that his hour has arrived), moves softly and secretly to his victim, in the same way as Tarquin moved while going to Lucretia's chamber. Let not the hard and solid earth hear the sound of my footsteps, and watch whither I am going, lest the stones themselves should by their echoes tell of my movement, and deprive the night of that horrible silence, which best befits it. But while I utter threats, I delav the execution of the deed, and Duncan lives. While I keep talking, the enthusiasm to do the deed cools down. [*A bell rings.*

This is the signal, it summons me; Duncan, do not hear the bell—for it is your death-bell—it calls you to heaven or to hell.

Scene II.

Enter Lady Macbeth.

L. Macb. The wine which has intoxicated the servants has put courage in me; that which has taken away their senses, has infused new spirit into me. [*Exit*

Peace—what's that noise? O, it was only the hooting of an owl—that seems to bid a grim farewell (to Duncan) in the same way as a bell-man who visits a condemned man before his execution He must be doing it now; the doors are open and the drunken servants are fast asleep, and neglect their duty. I mixed some drug with their drink, so that now life and death are struggling within them to decide whether they will live or die.

Macbeth. [*Within*] Who's there? what, ho!

Lady Macbeth. Alack, I am afraid they have awaked,
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us. Hark! I laid their daggers ready;
He could not miss 'em. Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.

Enter MACBETH.

My husband!

Macbeth. I have done the deed. Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady Macb. I heard the owl scream and the crickets cry.
Did not you speak?

Macbeth. When?

Lady Macbeth. Now.

Macbeth. As I descended?

Lady Macbeth. Ay.

Macbeth. Hark!
Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady Macbeth. Donalbain.

Macbeth. This is a sorry sight. [*Looking on his hands.*

Lady Macbeth A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macbeth. There's *one*[1] did laugh in's sleep, and one cried "Murder!"
That[2] they did wake each other: I stood and heard them:

mine

character of L. Macbeth is sho

1. *i.e.*, one who
2. so that

Macb. (*Speaking from behind the stage*) Who is there? What noise is that?

Lady Macb. Alas, I am afraid they have awoke, and the deed is not done. The attempt, if it does not succeed, will ruin us. There is some noise there. I kept the daggers ready—he could not possibly miss them. If he had not resembled my father, when he was sleeping, I would have done it.

Enter MACBETH

My husband!

Macb I have killed Duncan. Did you not hear a noise,

Lady Macb. I heard the screech of an owl and the chirping of the crickets. Did you not speak?

Macb When?

Lady Macb. Just now.

Macb. When I was coming down?

Lady Macb. Yes.

Macb Listen! Who sleeps in the chamber next to Duncan's?

L. *Macb.* Donalbain.

[redacted] *Macb.* (*Looking at the bloody hands*). This is a wretched sight.

Lady Macb. It is foolish to say that it is a wretched sight (when by this act you are going to be the king).

Macb. One of the sleeping persons laughed in his sleep, and the other cried, 'Murder,' so that with the noises they awakened each other. I stood still and heard them. But they merely said their prayers and then fell asleep.

But they did say their prayers, and address'd them
Again to sleep[1]

Lady Macb. There are two lodg'd together.

Macbeth. One cried "God bless us!" and "Amen!" the other;
As[2] they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
Listening their fear, I could not say "Amen!"
When they did say "God bless us!"

Lady Macbeth. Consider it not so deeply

Macbeth. But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

Lady Macbeth. These deeds must not be thought
After these ways;[3] so, it will make us mad.

Macbeth. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep,"—the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the *ravell'd*[4] *sleave*[5] of care,
The death of each day's life,[6] sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great *nature's second course*,[7]
Chief nourisher in life's feast,—

Lady Macbeth. What do you mean?

Macbeth. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more!"

1. composed themselves and fell asleep
2. *i.e.*, as if
3. in this manner
4. tangled
5. soft floss silk, used for weaving
6. which concludes each day of existence
7. second or most important course of dishes at nature's daily feast

Lady Macb. There are two persons sleeping there in that second chamber.

Macb. One of them cried, 'God bless us,' and the other replied, 'Be it so.' It seemed as though they had seen me with these bloody hands. As I listened to their cries of fear, I could not say 'Amen,' when they exclaimed, 'God bless us.'

Lady Macb. You should not think so deeply of these things.

Macb. But why could I not say 'Amen'? I was most in need of God's blessing, yet I could not utter that word, Amen.

Lady Macb. Such deeds should not be brooded over in this way, for then we will go mad.

Macb. It seemed to me I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more! Macbeth is murdering sleep'—sleep which is pure and innocent, and banishes all cares and anxieties,—sleep that terminates each day's active life and refreshes the exhausted body and mind—sleep, that is the most powerful restorative in nature—

Lady Macb. What are you talking about?

Macb. The voice continued to cry throughout the house, 'Sleep no more. The thane of Glamis has murdered a sleeping man, and therefore the thane of Cawdor shall sleep no more – Macbeth shall sleep no more.'

Lady Macbeth. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So *brainsickly*[1] of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy *witness*[2] from your hand.
Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macbeth. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

Lady Macbeth. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll *gild*[3] the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt. [*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macbeth. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here? ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great *Neptune's*[4] ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas *incarnadine*,[5]
Making the green one red.

1. in so mad a manner
2. *i.e.*, the stains of blood
3. smear with blood
4. sea-god
5. dye a crimson red

Lady Macb. Who could cry thus? My noble lord, you are giving way to weakness by indulging in such morbid fancies. Go, get some water and wash away the marks of blood which give evidence against you Why did you bring away these daggers from the room? They ought to be there. Go take them there, and smear the sleeping servants with blood.

Macb. I will not go again. I shudder to think of what I have done, I dare not look upon it again.

Lady Macb. Weak, irresolute man that you are! Give me the daggers. Dead and sleeping men are no more to be feared than pictures. It is only the child who fears to look on the picture of the devil. If Duncan is still bleeding, I shall smear the faces of the servants with blood, for we must make it appear that they are guilty.

[*Exit knocking within.*

Macb. Where does that knocking sound come from? How is it that I am frightened by every sound? How bloody these hands of mine are? I cannot bear to look upon them; it seems as though they would pluck out mine eyes. Will the water of all the oceans suffice to wash my hand clean? No—the blood on my hand will rather turn the entire sea red, converting the green mass into one uniform red.

Re enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady Macb. My hands are of your colour, but I shame
To wear a heart *so white* [1] [*Knocking within.*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then! Your *constancy*[2]
Hath left you unattended.[3] [*Knocking within.*] Hark! more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers: be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts

Macbeth. To know my deed, 'twere best not know myself. [*Knocking within.*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Enter a Porter. *Knocking within.*

Porter. Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were porter of hell-gate, he *should have old turning the key.*[4] [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there, i' the name of Beelzebub?[5] Here's a farmer that hanged himself *on the expectation of plenty*:[6] come in time; have napkins *enow*[7] about you; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name? Faith, here's an *equivocator*[8] that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet *could not equivocate to heaven*[9]: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knocking within.*] Knock, knock, knock! Who's there? Faith, here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose:[10] come in, tailor; here you may *roast your goose.*[11] [*Knocking*

1. so cowardly
2. resolution
3. no longer attends you as a guard
4. should have plenty of work in unlocking the door
5. devil
6. because the corn would grow cheap again
7. enough
8. one who uses equivocal or doubtful words in order to mislead
9. get to heaven by equivocation
10. breeches
11. heat your smoothing iron

Re-enter LADY MACBETH

Lady Macb. My hands are red like yours, but I am ashamed to have a cowardly heart like yours. [*Knocking sound behind the stage*] I hear a knocking sound at the southern gate Let us retire to our bed-room. A little water will wash away the marks of blood from our hand, and we shall be above suspicion. It is quite easily done. Your firmness seems to have deserted you. [*Knocking within*] Listen ; there is the knocking sound again Put on your dressing-gown, for we may be required to go out ; and (if we do not change into night-gowns) people would know that we have been keeping awake so late. Do not give way to such cowardly reflections in a manner unworthy of yourself.

Macb. Rather than know the enormity of my crime, I would fain not recover my consciousness. [*Knocking within*]. Wake Duncan with the knocking sound if it is possible ; I wish my deed undone, and that Duncan might awake. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III

Knocking within. *Enter a* PORTER.

Porter. What a loud knocking is there at the gate. If one were keeping the gate of hell, one would be frequently called upon to open and shut the door. (*Knock*). There is knocking still. Who is there, in the name of Beelzebub? Here is a farmer who committed suicide after waiting too long for a good harvest ; you have come at the right moment—have with you a plentiful supply of handkerchiefs, for you will find it too hot in hell and may have to wipe off the sweat too often. (*Knock*). There is another person knocking. Who is there, in the name of the devil? Here, surely, is an equivocator, who affirmed with oath both sides of a question, and who committed treason in the name of religion but could not make his way into heaven with all his

within.] Knock, knock; never at quiet! What are you? But this place is too cold for hell. I'll *devil-porter*[1] it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the *primrose way*[2] to the everlasting bonfire. [*Knocking within.*] *Anon, anon*[3]! I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX.

Macduff. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed,
That you do lie so late?

Porter. Faith, sir, we were *carousing*[4] till the *second*[5] cock.

Macduff. Is thy master *stirring*[6]?
Our knocking has awaked him; here he comes.

Re-enter MACBETH.

Lennox. Good morrow, noble sir,

Macbeth. Good morrow, both.

Macduff. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macbeth. Not yet.

Macduff. He did command me to call *timely*[7] on him:
I have almost *slipp'd*[8] the hour.

Macbeth. I'll bring you to him.

Macduff. I know this is a joyful trouble to you;
But yet 'tis *one*[9].

Macbeth. The labour we delight in *physics*[10] pain.
This is the door.

1. act the devil's porter
2. bright
3. coming at once
4. drinking
5. *i.e.*, about 3 o'clock
6. up
7. early
8. missed
9. *i.e.*, a trouble
10. cures

equivocation. O equivocator, come in. (*Knock*). There is knocking again? Who is this fellow? Indeed, he is an English tailor, who stole part of the cloth given to him for making garments. Come in tailor; the hell has fire enough to heat your smoothing irons. (*Knock*). More knocking; there seems to be no end to it, it seems. Who are you? This place is too cold for hell; I shall not play at keeping the hell gate any more. I had intended to admit men of all trades, who lead a life of pleasure and ease, and thus fit themselves for the everlasting fire of hell. Pray, do not be impatient. Please do not forget to pay the porter his fee.

Enter MACDUFF *and* LENNOX.

Macd. Did you keep up late last night, that you remain in the bed so late in the morning?

Port. Yes, sir, we were making merry till the early hours of the morning.

Macd. Has your master got out of bed? It seems our knocking has roused him. Here he comes.

Enter MACBETH.

Len. Good morning, noble sir.

Macb. Good morning to you both.

Macd Has the King got up from bed, noble earl?

Macb. No, not yet.

Macd. He ordered me to wait on him early in the morning. I am afraid I am late.

Macb. I shall take you to him

Macd. I know it gives you joy to take this trouble, still it is a trouble.

Macb. We do not feel pain in a thing which gives joy to us. Here is the door to the king's room.

Macduff. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my *limited service*.[1] [*Exit.*

Lennox. Goes the king hence to day?

Macbeth. He does: he did appoint so.

Lennox. The night has been *unruly*:[2] where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down; and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air; strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of *dire combustion*[3] and confused events
New hatch'd to the woful time: the *obscure bird*[4]
Clamour'd the *livelong night*:[5] some say, the earth
Was *feverous*[6] and did shake.

Macbeth. 'Twas a rough night.

Lennox. My young *remembrance*[7] cannot parallel
A fellow to it. as the last night

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!

Macbeth, Lennox. What's the matter?

Macduff. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke *ope*[8]
The Lord's anointed temple, and *stole*[9] thence
The *life o' the building*![10]

Macbeth. What is't you say? the life?

Lennox. Mean you his majesty?

1. appointed duty
2. stormy
3. terrible commotions (disturbances)
4. the owl
5. throughout the night
6. feverish, affected with ague
7. memory
8. *i.e.*, open
9. stolen
10. the soul which animated the body

Macd. I shall be bold to call, for it is my appointed duty. [*Exit.*

Len. Does the King go away today ?

Macb. He does, at least, that is his arrangement.

Len. The night has been rough. The chimneys of our room were blown down by the wind ; and some say, noises of weeping were heard in the air, and strange shrieks of death, and there were grim indications of new calamities and confusions, marking a most dreadful time. The owl, that bird of darkness, hooted all through the night ; and according to some, the earth shook, as though suffering from ague.

Macb. It was indeed a rough night.

Len. So far as the memory of a young man like myself goes, I have not seen a night so boisterous as the last night.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. O horror ! It is too horrible to be conceived in the mind, or expressed in words.

Macb. and Len. What is the matter ?

Macd. Destruction has done the worst deed. A most foul murder has been committed on the sacred person of the king, and his life is now extinct.

Macb. What is it you say ? What do you mean by ' life '.

Len. Do you mean his Majesty ?

Macduff Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new *Gorgon*[1]: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.
[*Exeunt Macb. and Len.*
Awake, awake!
Ring the alarum-bell. Murder and treason!
Banquo and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this *downy*[2] sleep, death's *counterfeit*,[3]
And look on death itself! up, up, and see
The *great doom's image*![4] Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites,
To countenance this horror! Ring the bell.
[*Alarum-bell rings.*

Re-enter Lady MACBETH.

Lady Macbeth. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to *parley*[5]
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak!

Macduff. O gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.

Enter BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murder'd!

Lady Macbeth. Woe, alas!
What, in our house?

Banquo. Too cruel any where.
Dear Duff, I prithee, contradict thyself,
And say it is not so.

1. a site that will turn you to stone

2. soft as down
3. image
4. a picture of the last judgment

5. conference

Macd. Come to the bed chamber, and blast your sight with the horrible spectacle—a spectacle that is as horrible as Gorgon. Do not ask me anything, come, see and speak for yourself.

[*Exeunt Macbeth and Lennox.*

Awake, awake. Ring the alarm-bell. Murder and treason ! Banquo and Donalbain, Malcolm, awake. Cast away soft sleep—sleep that resembles death, and look on Death itself. Get up, and see a sight that is (as terrible as the Day of Last Judgment.) Malcolm, Banquo, get up from your sleep as from the grave—come away like ghosts and see this horrible spectacle. Ring the alarm-bell. [*Bell rings.*

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady Macb. What has happened that such a terrible noise should rouse and call together the persons sleeping in the house ? Speak, speak.

Macd. O gentle lady, the news that I have to tell is not fit to be heard by you. Its recital in the hearing of a woman would have a killing effect.

Enter BANQUO.

O Banquo, Banquo, the king, our master is killed.

Lady Macb. Alas ! Has he been killed in this house ?

Ban. The murder would have been too cruel anywhere. Dear Macduff, I pray you, unsay what you have said ; say that the king is not dead.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX.

Macbeth. Had I but died an hour before this *chance*,[1]
I had lived a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing *serious*[2] in *mortality*:[3]
All is but *toys*:[4] renown and grace is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this *vault*[5] to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN.

Donalbain. What is *amiss*?[6]

Macbeth. *You are*,[7] and do not know't:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macduff. Your royal father's murder'd.

Malcolm. O, by whom?

Lennox. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't:
Their hands and faces were all *badg'd*[8] with blood;
So were their daggers, which unwiped we found
Upon their pillows:
They stared, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macbeth. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macduff. Wherefore did you so?

Macbeth. Who can be wise, *amazed*[9], temperate and furious,

1. happening
2. important
3. this mortal life
4. trifles
5. world
6. wrong
7. *i.e.*, you are amiss
8. marked as with a badge
9. confused

Rhetorical, emphatic, vivid because laboured and artificial.

Re-enter MACBETH *and* LENNOX *and* ROSS.

Macb. If I had died only an hour before this happened, my life would have been a happy one: for from this time, there is nothing serious in life; everything is mere trifle. Honour and grace are gone; all the charm of life has passed away, and what remains is hollow and worthless.

Enter MALCOLM *and* DONALBAIN

Don. What is wrong here?

Macb. It is you who are wronged, and you do not know it. The spring, the source from which you draw your life is stopped.

Macb. The king, your father, has been murdered.

Mal. Alas—by whom?

Len. The servants of his chamber seem to have done it. Their hands and faces are all marked with blood, and their daggers, which we found on their pillows, were also stained with blood. They looked vacantly and seemed to be mad, so that no man was safe with them.

Macb. O, I am sorry that in my fury I killed them.

Macb. Why did you do so?

Macb. Can a man be considerate and distracted at the same time, moderate and furious, loyal and calm? No, it is not possible for any man to be so.

rashness or haste

Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The *expedition*[1] of my violent love
Outrun the pauser, reason. Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin *laced*[2] with his golden blood;
And his *gash'd stabs*[3] look'd like a breach in nature
For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly *breech'd*[4] with gore: who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and in that heart
Courage to make's love known?

Lady Macbeth. *Help me hence*,[5] ho!

Macduff. Look to the lady.

Malcolm. [*Aside to Don.*] Why do we hold our tongues,
That most may claim this argument for ours[6]?

Donalbain [*Aside to Malcolm*] What should be spoken here, where our fate,
Hid in an *auger-hole*,[7] may rush, and seize us?
Let's away;
Our tears are *not yet brew'd*.[8]

Malcolm. [*Aside to Don.*] Nor our strong sorrow
Upon the foot of motion.[9]

Banquo. Look to the lady:
[*Lady Macbeth is carried out.*
And when we have our *naked frailties*[10] hid,
That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
And question this most bloody piece of work,
To know it further. Fears and *scruples*[11] shake us:
In the great hand of God I stand, and thence
Against the *undivulg'd pretence*[12] I fight
Of *treasonous*[13] malice.

1. impetuosity; rashness or haste
2. streaked
3. open wounds
4. indecently clothed
5. she faints
6. that have the best right to speak on such a subject
7. a hole as small as that made by an auger, *i.e.* (a small tool for boring wood)
8. not ready for use
9. ready to move in action
10. half-dressed bodies
11. doubts
12. secret designs
13. treacherous

There lay Duncan with his white body streaked with his red blood, his open wounds looking like holes through which death entered to destroy his life; and there lay the murderers bathed in the blood they had spilt, their daggers hideously coated with blood. Who that had a loving heart, and had a courage to show that love, could restrain himself?

Lady Macb. Help me, take me away from this place. [*She faints.*

Macd. Look to the lady.

Mal. (*Aside to Don.*) Why are we silent, who are most vitally concerned in this affair?

Don. (*Aside to Mal.*) We should not say anything here since danger may spring upon us from unexpected quarters. Let us go away from this place. It is not time for us to shed tears over our dead father.

Mal. (*Aside to Don.*) Nor it is possible for us now to express our sorrow fittingly in words.

Ban. Take away the lady.

[*Lady Macbeth is carried away.*

And when we have properly clothed our bodies to protect ourselves from cold, let us assemble together and investigate this most bloody murder in order to find out the fears connected with it. We are shaken by doubts and facts. I resign myself to the care and protection of God, and taking may stand on it, I am ready to fight the hidden plans of the traitors.

Macduff. And so do I.

All. So all.

Macbeth. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[*Exeunt all except Malcolm and Donalbain.*

Mal. What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office
Which the false man does easy.[1] I'll to England.

Donalbain. To Ireland I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

Malcolm. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted[2], and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
And let *us not be dainty of*[3] leave-taking,
But shift away: there's *warrant*[4] in that theft
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Outside* MACBETH'S *castle.*

Enter ROSS *and an* OLD MAN.

Old Man. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the *volume of*[5] which time I have seen
Hours dreadful and things strange; but this *sore night*[6]
Hath trifled[7] former knowings.

1. which comes easy to the hypocrite
2. reached the mark
3. be decent in
4. justification
5. course
6. awful
7. has made mere trifle

Macd. I am also ready to do so.

All. So are we all ready.

Macd. Let us put on our manly courage and costume, and then assemble in the hall.

All. We agree.

[*Exeunt all but Malcolm and Donalbain.*

Mal. What will you do? Let us not join them. It is a hyprocrite only who can feign a sorrow that is not felt. I am going to England.

Don. I shall go to Ireland. Living apart, we shall be safer. Here men will smile, and yet sharpen their daggers. The more closely related a kinsman, the more murderous he is likely to be.

Mal. The conspiracy, of which our father was the victim, is not yet complete, and the safest course for us is to get away beyond its reach. So let us ride away, and let us not be very particular in bidding farewell to our host and others, but let us silp away. We are fully justified in fleeing away stealthily, for there is the risk of being mercilessly murdered, if we stay here.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Enter ROSS *and an* OLD MAN.

Old M. I can well remember the incidents of seventy years, and during this period I have witnessed many strange incidents and passed through terrible times. But nothing that I can call to my mind can approach in horror this frightful night.

Ross. Ah, good father,
Thou seest, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his *bloody stage*[1]: by the clock 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is't night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth *entomb*[2],
When living light should kiss it?

Old Man. 'Tis unnatural.
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A *falcon*,[3] towering in her pride of place,
Was by a *mousing owl*[4] *hawk'd at*[5] and kill'd.

Ross. And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the *minions*[6] of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, *as*[7] they would make
War with mankind.

Old Man. 'Tis said they eat each other.

Ross. They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF.

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macduff. Why, see you not?

Ross. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

Macduff. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Ross. Alas, the day!
What good could they *pretend*[8]?

1. the earth which is the scene of such cruelties
2. cover
3. a bird of prey
4. mouse-hunting owl
5. attacked on the wing
6. most esteemed
7. as if
8. expect

Ross. Ah, good old man, you see, the gods seem highly displeased with man's wickedness and are threatening his life with destruction. By the clock, it ought to be day, but the dark night still chokes the sun, and prevents him from throwing out his beams. Is it the triumph of the night or the shame of the day? In any case, at this moment, when the earth should be bathed in light, it is wrapped in thick darkness.

Old M. It is as unnatural as the murder of a King. Last Tuesday, a falcon, while she was soaring high, was chased and killed by an owl, which hunts mice on the ground.

Ross. And another most strange event has happened. The horses of Duncan, the pick of their breed—beautiful and swift—turned wild, and breaking open their stalls, ran away, as though they were resolved to fight against mankind.

Old M. It is said that they devoured one another.

Ross. They did so, and I saw it with my own eyes. I was really startled to see this sight. Here comes the noble Macduff.

Enter MACDUFF.

How are things going on now?

Macd. Why, can't you see for yourself?

Ross. Has it been found out who committed this bloody murder?

Macd. The servants murdered by Macbeth.

Ross. Alas! What could they gain by it?

Macduff. They were *suborn'd*[1]:
Malcolm and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n[2] away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

Ross. *'Gainst nature*[3] still:
Thriftless ambition, that wilt *ravin up*[4]
Thine own life's means! Then 'tis most like
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth.

Macduff He is already named, and gone to Scone to be crowned
To be invested.

Ross. Where is Duncan's body?

Macduff. Carried to Colme-kiln,
The sacred *storehouse*[5] of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

Ross. Will you to Scone?

Macduff No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Ross. Well, I will thither.

Macd. Well, may you see things well done there: adieu!
Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old Man. God's *benison*[6] go with you, and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes! [*Exeunt.*

1. secretly instigated
2. have secretly escaped
3. contrary to nature
4. utterly devour
5. tomb
6. blessings

Macd. They were bribed. Malcolm and Donalbain, the two sons of the king, have secretly escaped and this fact lays suspicion upon them.

Ross. This is also most unnatural. Ambition, that destroys the very source from which it sprang, can never thrive. Then it is most likely that succession to the throne will fall upon Macbeth.

Macd. He has already been nominated King, and has gone to Scone to be crowned.

Ross. Where is the body of Duncan ?

Macd. It has been taken to Colme-kiln, which is the burial-place of all his predecessors and which contains their bones.

Ross. Are you going to Scone ?

Macd. No cousin, I am going to Fife.

Ross. Well, I shall go there.

Macd. I hope everything will be performed there in a proper way. Farewell, for our position may be worse than what it was in the past.

Ross. Farewell, father.

Old M. May God bless you, and all others, who seek to turn evil into good and enemies into friends.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Forres. The palace.*

Enter BANQUO.

Banquo. Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully *for't*[1]: yet it was said
It should not *stand*[2] in thy *posterity*[3],
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches *shine*[4]—
Why, by the *verities*[5] on thee made good,
May they not be *my oracles*[6] as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush; no more.

Sennet[7] *sounded. Enter* MACBETH, *as king;* Lady MACBETH, *as queen;* LENNOX, ROSS, Lords, Ladies, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. Here's our chief guest.

Lady Macbeth. If he had been forgotten,
It had been as a gap in our great feast,
And *all-thing*[8] unbecoming.

Macbeth. To night we hold a *solemn*[9] supper, sir,
And I'll request your presence.

Banquo. Let your highness
Command upon me; to the which my duties
Are with a most indissoluble tie
For ever knit.

1. *i.e.*, for it
2. remain
3. descendants
4. *i.e.*, with the brightness of truth
5. truth
6. predictions for me
7. flourish of trumpets
8. altogether
9. ceremonious

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Forres. The Palace.*

Enter BANQUO.

Ban. You have got it now--everything, the thane-ship of Glamis, Cawdor and also the throne, as the weird sisters promised : and I fear you acted most treacherously for it ; yet it was said that your descendants shall not be kings, but that I shall be the ancestor of a long line of kings. If they speak the truth—and their prediction has come true in your case—then judging by the truths proved in your case, I may as well expect that their prophecies will prove equally true in my case, and this fact may well inspire me with hope. But I must remain silent.

Trumpet-notes are heard. Enter Macbeth *as king,* Lady Macbeth *as queen, and others.*

Macb Here is our principal guest.

Lady Macb. If he had been omitted, there would be something lacking to our great feast, and the omission would be very improper.

Macb. Tonight we are holding a banquet, and I request you to be present at it.

Ban. It is for your highness to command me, and my duties are bound to your commands by indissoluble ties (of loyalty).

Macbeth. Ride you this afternoon ?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth. We should have else desired your good advice,
Which still hath been both *grave*[1] and *prosperous,*[2]
In this day's council ; but *we'll take to-morrow*[3].
Is't far you ride ?

Banquo. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
'Twixt this and supper : go not my horse the better,
I must become a borrower of the night
For a dark hour or twain.

Macbeth. Fail not our feast.

Banquo. My lord, I will not.

Macbeth. We hear, our bloody cousins are *bestow'd*[4]
In England and in Ireland, not confessing
Their cruel *parricide,*[5] filling their hearers
With strange invention : but of that to-morrow,
When *therewithal*[6] we shall have *cause of state*[7]
Craving us jointly[8]. Hie you to horse : adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you ?

Banquo. Ay, my good lord : our time does call upon's.

Macbeth. I wish your horses swift and sure of foot ;
And so I do commend you to their backs.
Farewell. [*Exit Banquo.*
Let every man be master of his time,
Till seven at night ; to make society

1. weighty in its character
2. happy or leading to good issues
3. we will employ to-morrow in listening to it
4. have taken up their abode
5. have taken their abode
6. together with that
7. state affairs
8. requiring our joint consideration

Macb. Do you go out riding this afternoon ?

Ban. Yes, my noble lord.

Macb We would otherwise have sought your advice (which has al ays been wise and productive of good results) in the council today. But it does not matter ; I shall consult you tomorrow. Do you ride far ?

Ban. As far, my lord, as will take up the time from now up to supper. If my horse does not go fast, I may have to ride in the dark for an hour or two.

Macb. In any case, do not fail to attend the feast.

Ban. No, my lord, I shall not.

Macb. I am told that my bloody cousins are gone away to England and to Ireland. They have not confessed their guilt, and are concocting strange lies. But we shall talk of this matter tomorrow, when we shall attend to other state matters. Get you to your ; farewell till dinner time. Does Fleance accompany you ?

Ban. Yes, my noble lord. It is time we started

Macb. I wish your horses may be swift and steady—so I request you to get upon your horses. Farewell [*Exit Banquo*]. Let every man occupy himself in any way he likes till seven. I shall be alone till supper time in order that I may better

The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you!
[*Exeunt all except Macbeth and an Attendant.*
Sirrah, a word with you: *attend those men*
Our pleasure[1]?

Attendant. They are, my lord, *without*[2] the palace-gate.

Macbeth. Bring them before us.

[*Exit Attendant.*

To be *thus*[3] is nothing;
But to be safely thus.—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep;[4] and in his *royalty of nature*[5]
Reigns that which would be fear'd: 'tis much he dares:
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose *being*[6] I do fear: and under him
My *Genius*[7] is rebuked; as, it is said,
Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the *sisters*[8],
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him; then prophet-like
They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my *gripe*,[9]
Thence *to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand*,[10]
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I *filed*[11] my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
Put *rancours*[12] in the vessel of my peace
Only for them, and mine *eternal jewel*[13]
Given to the *common enemy of man*,[14]
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!
Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
And *champion me to the utterance*![15] Who's there?

1. are those men waiting to hear what I may be pleased to say
2. outside
3. to be king
4. are firmly planted
5. *i.e.*, his noble kingly nature
6. existence
7. almost = my conscience
8. *i.e.* weird sisters or witches
9. grasp
10. to be torn from grasp by the hand of one not descended from me
11. defiled
12. malice
13. immortal soul
14. The Devil
15. chellenge me to fight the death

enjoy the company of friends. Till then, good bye. [*Exeunt all but Macbeth and Servant.*] Fellow, one word : are those men waiting for me ?

Attend They are outside the palace gate.

Macb. Bring them here to me. [*Exit Attendant.*] To be king, and to remain always in fear, is no comfort : I would be happy if I could be safe. I am very much afraid of Banquo ; and the reis something noble about him which would inspire fear. He is brave ; and with his bravery he unites a judgment, that makes him act boldly but safely. There is no one else whom I fear on this earth, and in his presence my spirit trembles in fear, just as, it is said, Mark Antony's did in the presence of Octavius Cæsar. He rebuked the weird sisters when they greeted me as king, and bade them speak to him. Then they predicted that he would be the ancestor of a dynasty of kings. They placed upon my head a useless crown and a barren sceptre, to be snatched away from me by one not belonging to my line, and no issue of mine will succeed to the throne. If it be so, then I have defiled my hands with blood for the sake of Banquo's children ; for them I have murdered the kind Duncan—for them I have destroyed my peace of mind and have given away my immortal soul to the Devil who is the enemy of all mankind. Rather than that it should be so, I would challenge fate and fight it to the death. Who is there ?

Re-enter Attendant, *with two* Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.
[*Exit Attendant.*
Was it not yesterday we spoke together ?

First Mur. It was, so please your highness.

Macbeth. Well then, now
Have you consider'd of my speeches ? Know
That it was he in the times past which held you
So under fortune; *which*[1] you thought had been
Our innocent self: this I *made good*[2] to you
In our last conference, *pass'd in probation with*[3] you,
How you *were borne in hand*[4] how *cross'd*,[5] *the instruments*,[6]
Who wrought with them, and all things else that might
To half a soul and to a notion crazed
Say "Thus did Banquo."

First Murderer. You made it known to us.

Macbeth. I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go ? Are you so gospell'd
To pray for this *good*[7] man and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
And beggar'd yours for ever ?

First Murderer *We are men*,[8] my *liege*.[9]

1. who
2. clearly proved
3. proved to you in detail
4. taken in
5. thwarted
6. the means
7. spoken ironically
8. have the natural feelings of men
9. lord

Re-enter Attendant *with two* Murderers.

Now go to the door and wait there till I call you. [*Exit Attendant.*] Was it not yesterday we spoke together ?

First Mur. Yes, your Majesty.

Macb. Well, then, have you carefully thought over what I told you ? I may tell you that it was Banquo, who was responsible for putting you down in the past—not I, as you mistakenly think. This I explained to you in the course of our last conversation. I proved to you in detail how Banquo deluded you with false hopes and then thwarted you, what methods he adopted and what agents he employed to execute his plans ; and I also explained to you other facts that could easily show even to a stupid and crazed mind that it was none but Banquo who ruined your prospects.

First Mur. You did tell us all these things.

Macb. Yes, I did so, and I said something more, which is the reason of our present interview. Are you so patient by nature as to tolerate all this ? Are you so deeply imbued with the spirit of Christianity as to pray to God for Banquo and his children—that Banquo, who has totally ruined your prospects in life and made your children beggars for ever.

First Mur. We are men, my lord, and as such

Macbeth. Ay, in the *catalogue*[1] ye go for men ;
As hounds and greyhounds, *mongrels,*[2] spaniels, curs,
Shoughs,[3] water-rugs, and demi-wolves *are clept*[4]
All by the name of dogs ; the *valued file*[5]
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The housekeeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him closed,[6] whereby he does receive
Particular addition,[7] *from the bill*[8]
That writes them all alike : and *so of men*[9].
Now, if you have a *station*[10] in the file,
Not i' the worst rank of manhood, say't ;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off,
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,[11]
Which *in*[12] his death were perfect.
Second Murderer. I am one my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incens'd that I am reckless what
I do to spite the world.
First Murderer. And I another
So weary with disasters, *tugg'd*[13] with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid *on't.*[14]
Macbeth. Both of you
Know Banquo was your enemy.
Both Murderers. True, my lord.

1. general list
2. animals of a mixed breed
3. rough, shaggy-coated dogs
4. are called
5. list showing value and prices
6. has endowed him with
7. distinguishing title
8. in contrast with the general catalogue
9. the same thing holds good in regard to him
10. position
11. whose health is imperfect as long as he lives
12. with
13. dragged about
14. of

subject to common human weaknesses.

Macb. Yes, in the list of mankind, you are no doubt regarded as human beings, just as hounds, greyhounds, mixed breeds, curs, shoughs, shaggy water-dogs, and the cross-breeds between wolves and dogs are all called by the name of dogs. But in the merit-catalogue, these dogs are distinguished by their qualities—they are swift or slow or cunning, good house-dogs or hunters, according to the virtue, with which they have been endowed by nature; so each dog receives a distinctive epithet, though all are called dogs in a general list. This is also true of man. Now if you would wish to have a position in life and refuse to be included among the lowest class of mankind, speak out, and I shall entrust to you a task, which, when done, will not only rid you of your enemy but will make you my fast friends, for I cannot enjoy my life as long as Banquo lives, and shall be quite happy when he dies.

Sec. Mur. I am a man, my lord, who has been so roughly used by mankind that I am prepared to do anything to be revenged on the world.

First Mur. And I am another, who has been worried and harassed by fortune in so many ways that I am determined to risk my life in any undertaking so that I may mend it or end it.

Macb. Are you both convinced that Banquo was your enemy?

Both Mur. We are, my lord.

Macbeth. So is he mine, and *in such bloody distance*[1]
That every minute of his being *thrusts*
Against my near'st of life:[2] and though I could
With *barefaced power*[3] sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will *avouch*[4] it, yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but *wail*[5] his fall
Who[6] I myself struck down: and thence it is
That I to your assistance do make love,
Masking the business from the common eye
For sundry weighty reasons.

Second Murderer. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

First Murderer Though our lives—

Macbeth. Your spirits shine through you. Within this hour at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves,
Acquaint you with the *perfect spy o' the time*,[7]
The moment *on't*;[8] for't must be done to-night,
And *something from*[9] the palace; always thought
That *I require a clearness*:[10] and with him—
To leave no *rubs*[11] nor *botches*[12] in the work—
Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
Whose *absence*[13] is no less *material*[14] to me
Than is his father's, *must embrace the fate*[15]
Of that dark hour. *Resolve yourselves apart*:[16]
I'll come to you anon.

Both Murderers. We are resolved, my lord.

1. at such close and murderous quarters
2. is a threat to my existence
3. unblushing exercise of power
4. justify
5. *i e.*, bewail
6. whom
7. the exact moment when the thing is to be done
8. of
9. some distance away from
10. I should not be implicated
11. impediment
12. clumsy workmanship
13. death
14. important
15. must suffer the same fate
16. retire and make up your mind

Macb. So he is my enemy; and we are so bitterly hostile to each other that every minute of his life is like a deathblow to all that I hold dear in life. And though I could get rid of him by the open exercise of my royal authority, and could say that I did it because I willed it, yet I cannot do it because some friends of mine are also his friends, and I cannot afford to lose their friendship; besides, for the sake of appearance I would be required to lament the death of Banquo, whom I myself would slay. And it is for this reason that I seek your help, for I would conceal my plans from the public owing to certain weighty reasons.

Sec. Mur. We shall, my lord, do whatever you bid us do.

First Mur. Even at the risk of our lives—

Macb. Now you show your courage. Within an hour at most I shall tell you where you should post yourselves, and communicate to you the exact time also, after careful observation of things, for it must be done tonight, and at some distance from the palace, and you must bear in mind that I must be free from suspicion. And with him—not to leave any flaw or imperfection in the work—let his son Fleance, who accompanies him and whose death is as necessary for my purpose as Banquo's, also die in that dark hour. Go and make up your mind. I shall come to you soon.

Both Mur. We have made up our minds, my lord.

Macbeth. I'll call upon you straight: abide within.
[*Exeunt Murderers.*
It is concluded: Banquo, thy soul's flight,
If it find heaven, must find it out to-night.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The palace.*

Enter LADY MACBETH *and a* Servant.

Lady Macbeth. Is Banquo gone from court?

Servant Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady Macbeth. Say to the king, I would attend his leisure
For a few words.

Servant. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*

Lady Macbeth. Naught's had, all's spent,
Where our desire is got without *content*:[1]
'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
Than by destruction dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord! why do you keep alone,
Of sorriest fancies your companions making;
Using[2] those thoughts which should indeed have died
With them they think on? Things without all remedy
Should be without regard: wha't done is done.

Macbeth. We have *scotch'd*[3] the snake, not kill'd it:
She'll *close*[4] and be herself, whilst our *poor*[5] malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.
But let the frame of things disjoint,[6] both the worlds suffer,

1. peace of mind
2. cherishing
3. slightly wounded
4. heal up
5. feeble
6. let the whole fabric of the world fall to pieces

Macb. I shall see you soon. Wait within
[*Exeunt Murderers.*

The affair is settled. Banquo, if your soul goes to heaven, it will start on its journey tonight [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The Palace*

Enter LADY MACBETH *and a* Servant.

Lady Macb. Has Banquo left the palace ?

Serv. Yes Madam, but he comes back tonight.

Lady Macb. Tell the king that I would like to have a few words with him, if he is free.

Serv. Madam, I shall. [*Exit.*

Lady Macb. We have gained nothing—everything is lost, for we cannot enjoy peace of mind, though we have gained our desire. It is better to die than to live in doubtful joy and suspense by murdering others.

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord, why do you remain aloof indulging in gloomy fancies, and brooding over those thoughts which should have ended with the death of Duncan. Things that are past remedy should be ignored. What is done is finished.

Macb. We have but wounded the snake, not killed it. The wound will heal up and she will be as dangerous as before, and we shall find that the wound we have inflicted is ineffectual and we shall remain in danger of her poisoned tooth. But we shall not yield; the order of the world may be shattered, heaven and earth may perish, but we will

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams
That shake us nightly: better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our peace, have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie
In restless *ecstasy*.[1] Duncan is in his grave;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic,[2] *foreign levy*,[3] nothing,
Can *touch*[4] him further.

Lady Macbeth. Come on;
Gentle my lord, *sleek o'er*[5] your rugged looks;
Be bright and jovial among your guests to-night.

Macbeth. So shall I, love; and so, I pray, be you:
Let your remembrance *apply*[6] to Banquo;
Present him eminence,[7] both with eye and tongue:
Unsafe the while that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams,[8]
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are.

Lady Macbeth. You must leave this.

Macbeth. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance live.

Lady Macbeth. But in them *nature's copy's*[9] not *eterne*[10]

1. anger or grief
2. *i.e.*, treason at home
3. (invasion by) foreign forces
4. harm
5. smooth over
6. devote itself
7. show him honour
8. wash our honour in these streams of flattery in order to keep them bright
9. human body which is governed by the law of physical nature
10. eternal

no more eat our meals in fear and allow our sleep to be disturbed every night by frightful dreams. We would rather die and be with those whom we have killed in the vain hope of gaining happiness, than live in continuous agony. Duncan is dead and sleeps peacefully, and the worries of life are over for him. The traitor has done the worst to him—nothing can touch him any more; neither sword nor poison, neither rebellion at home nor invasion from abroad, can afflict him any more.

Lady Macb. Come on, my gentle lord, smooth your perturbed looks; look bright and happy among your guests tonight.

Macb. I shall do so, my dear wife, and I pray you, you also do the same. Please attend specially to Banquo, and honour him both with your looks and words. We are still unsafe, and so we shall have to honour and flatter Banquo, and we must make our faces masks to our hearts and conceal our real feelings.

Lady Macb. You must not think like this.

Macb. O my dear wife, my mind is tormented by my own thoughts. You know that Banquo and his son Fleance are still alive.

Lady Macb. But they are not immortal; the tenure of their life is not perpetual.

Macbeth. There's comfort yet; they are assailable:
Then be thou *jocund*:[1] ere the bat hath flown
His *cloister'd flight*,[2] ere to black Hecate's summons
The *shard-borne beetle*[3] with his drowsy hums
Hath rung *night's yawning peal*,[4] there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady Macbeth. What's to be done?

Macbeth. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest *chuck*,[5]
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, *seeling*[6] night,
Scarf up[7] the tender eye of pitiful day;
And with thy bloody and invisible hand
Cancel and tear to piece's that *great bond*[8]
Which keeps me pale! Light thickens, and the crow
Makes wing to the *rooky*[9] wood:
Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.
Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;
Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill:
So, prithee, go with me. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *A park near the palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

First Mur. But who did bid thee join with us?

Third Murderer. Macbeth.

Sec. Mur. *He needs not our mistrust*;[10] since he delivers

1. happy
2. wheeling round the cloisters
3. the beetle with its horny wings
4. a peal which causes night to yawn
5. a term of endearment
6. closing
7. cover as with a scarf
8. *i.e.*, the existence of Banquo
9. abounding in rooks, a bird of the kind of crow
10. we need not mistrust him

Macb. That is no doubt a consolation ; they are open to attack So be merry ; in the evening, before the bat has begun to fly about in cloisters, before the beetle, borne along by its horny wings, has, at the call of Hecate, begun to make a humming noise (which induces sleep), there shall be done a deed of a most frightful nature.

Lady Macbeth. What is to be done ?

Macb. You need not worry about it, my darling, till it is done, and you praise it. Come, blinding night, cover up the gentle light of the day, and with your unseen hand tear away the bond of Banquo's life that keeps me in constant dread. It is growing dark, and the crow is flying back to its wood. The honest creatures of the day are feeling tired and dropping off to sleep, and the wicked things of night are active, and are pursuing their victims. You wonder at my words—but be patient. Evil things, once begun must be strengthened by further evil things. So I pray you, come with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *A park near the Palace.*

Enter three Murderers.

First Mur. But who asked you to join us ?

Third Mur. Macbeth.

Sec. Mur. There is no reason to suspect him, for he speaks of the work we have to do, exactly as

Our offices,[1] and what we have to do,
To the direction just.[2]
First Murderer. Then stand with us.
The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day :
Now spurs the *lated*[3] traveller apace
To gain the timely inn ; and near approaches
The subject of our watch.
Third Murderer. Hark ! I hear horses.
Ban. [*Within*] Give us a light there, ho !
Second Murderer. Then 'tis he : the rest
That are *within the note of expectation*[4]
Already are i' the court.
First Murderer. His horses go about.
Third Murderer. Almost a mile : but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace-gate
Make it their walk.
Second Murderer. A light, a light !
Third Murderer. 'Tis he.
First Murderer. *Stand to't*[5].
Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE *with a torch.*
Banquo. It will be rain to-night.
First Murderer. Let it come down.
[*They assault Banquo.*
Banquo. O, treachery ! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly !
Thou mayst revenge. O slave ! [*Dies. Fleance escapes.*
Third Mur. Who did strike out the light ?
First Murderer. Was't not the way ?

1. the instructions he gives us as to our duties
2. *i.e.*, agrees axactly to the directions (we had from Macbeth himself)
3. *i.e.*, belated
4. in the list of expected guests
5. don't shirk

it was delivered to us.

First Mur. Then you remain with us. There are yet some faint streaks of light in the western horizon. Now the belated traveller rides fast to reach his inn in time ; and the person for whom we are waiting is not far off.

Third Mur. Listen, I hear the sound of horses' hoofs.

Ban. (*Within*) Bring us a light, ho !

Sec. Mur. It is he. The rest of the guests, who are expected to come, have already arrived at the court.

First Mur. His horses are taking a longer route.

Third Mur. Yes, that route is a mile longer. But like other men, he usually walks the distance from here to the palace-gate.

Sec. Mur. Here is a light.

Third Mur. It is he.

First Mur. Stand fast.

Enter BANQUO *and* FLEANCE *with a torch.*

Ban. It will rain tonight.

First Mur. Let the blow come down on his head. [*They attack Banquo.*

Banquo. This is treachery. Get away, Fleance. Get away. You may avenge my death. O you rogue.

[*Dies. Fleance escapes.*

Third Mur. Who put out the light ?

First Mur. Was it not right ?

Third Mur. There's but one down; the son is fled.

Second Murderer. We have lost
Best half of our affair.

First Mur. Well, let's away, and say how much is done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The same. Hall in the palace.*

A banquet prepared. Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSS, LENNOX, Lords *and* Attendants.

Macbeth. You know your own *degrees*,[1] sit down: *at first*[2]
And last the hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macbeth. Ourself will mingle with society,
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps *her state*,[3] but *in best time*[4]
We *will require her welcome*.[5]

Lady Macb. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

Macb. See, they *encounter thee*[6] with their hearts' thanks.
Both sides are even: here I'll sit i' the midst:

Enter first Murderer *to the door.*

Be *large*[7] in mirth; anon we'll *drink a measure*[8]
The table round. [*Approaching the door.*] There's blood upon thy face.

Murderer. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macbeth. 'Tis better thee *without*[9] than he within.
Is he dispatch'd?

1. rank or position at the table
2. from the beginning to the end
3. her chair of state with a canopy over it
4. at the proper time
5. call upon her to give you welcome
6. respond to you
7. free
8. drink health
9. outside

Third Mur. Only one has been killed; the son has escaped.

Sec. Mur. We failed to do the more important part of our business.

First Mur. Well, let us go and report how we have executed our business. [*Exeunt.*

Scene IV. *Hall in the Palace.*

Enter Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Ross, Lennox, Lords *and* Attendants.

Macb. You know your rank. Sit down according to your rank. Once for all I accord to you a hearty welcome.

Lords. Thanks to your Majesty.

Macb. I shall sit with you, and play the part of the host. The hostess is seated on her chair of state, and at the proper time I shall request her to welcome the guests.

Lady Macb. Sir, bid our friends welcome in my behalf. I warmly welcome them all.

Macb. See, the guests return sincere thanks to you. On both sides of the table, the guests are equal in number; here I shall sit in your midst. [*The First Murderer appears at the door*]. Enjoy yourself fully; soon I shall join you and drink the health of all. [*Approaching the door, Macbeth speaks to the murderer*]. There are marks of blood on your face.

Mur. It is the blood of Banquo.

Macb. It is better that you should be here outside the hall than that he should be inside it. Is he killed?

Murderer. My lord, his throat is cut; that I did for him.

Macb. Thou art the best o' the cut-throats: yet he's good
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the *nonpareil.*[1]

Murderer. Most royal sir,
Fleance *is scaped.*[2]

Macb. Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect:
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As *broad and general*[3] as the *casing*[4] air:
But now I am *cabin'd,*[5] *cribb'd,*[6] confined, bound in
To *saucy*[7] doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

Murderer. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,
With twenty *trenched gashes*[8] on his head;
The least *a death to nature.*[9]

Macbeth. Thanks for that:
There the grown serpent lies; the worm that's fled
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear, *ourselves,*[10] again. [*Exit Murderer.*

Lady Macbeth. My royal lord,
You do not give the *cheer*:[11] the feast is *sold*[12]
That is not often *vouch'd,*[13] while 'tis *a-making,*[14]
'Tis given with welcome:[15] to feed were best at home;

other wise

1. the one without an equal
2. has escaped
3. free and unrestrained
4. surrounding
5. shut as in a cabin
6. shut as in a crib; crib something narrower than a cabin
7. insolent
8. deeply cut wounds
9. enough to kill a man
10. each other
11. the cheerful welcome
12. sold not given
13. asserted
14. in progress
15. object of 'vouched'

Mur. My lord, his throat is cut. I have cut it.

Macb. Then you are the best of murderers. But he who has killed Fleance is also worthy of praise. If you have done it, you are matchless.

Mur. I am sorry, your Majesty, Fleance has escaped.

Macb. Then my dread comes back again. If Fleance had been killed, I would feel safe like marble, firm like rock and free like the air that envelops the earth. But now that Fleance is alive, I feel imprisoned, cramped and confined, and am a prey to tormenting doubts and fears. But is Banquo dead ?

Mur. Yes, my lord. He is now safe in a ditch with twenty deep wounds on his head, the smallest of which is enough to kill a man.

Macb. I thank you for doing that. Then the full-grown snake is dead ; the young snake that has fled is harmless now, but will develop poison in the future. You may go now. Tomorrow we shall discuss the matter again.

Lady Macb. My lord, you do not welcome the guests as you should. A feast is no better than one sold, when the host does not welcome the guests when it is held. When this kind of cheer is absent, one should eat at home. The welcome that is accorded to the guests makes a feast sweet and

From thence the *sauce*[1] to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

Macbeth. Sweet *remembrancer*![2]
Now, good digestion *wait on*[3] appetite,
And health on both!

Lennox. May't please your highness sit.

[*The Ghost of Banquo enters, and sits in Macbeth's place.*

Macb. *Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,*[4]
Were the graced person of our Banquo present:
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
Than pity for mischance!

Ross. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please't your highness
To grace us with your royal company

Macbeth. The table's full.

Lennox. Here is a place reserv'd, sir.

Macbeth. Where?

Lennox. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your highness?

Macbeth. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macbeth. Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.

Lady Macbeth. Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,
And hath been from his youth: pray you, keep seat;

1. something that gives zest to food
2. one who reminds
3. follow
4. we should have under our roof all the distinguished persons who are an honour to our country

delicious. A party would be very dull without such ceremony.

Macb. It is good of you to remind me. I wish you a keen appetite, good digestion, and then good health.

Ben. Will your royal highness take a seat?

[*The Ghost of Banquo enters and sits in the chair reserved for Macbeth*].

Macb. Here in this hall, there would be assembled all the nobles of the country; if the virtuous Banquo were present, whom I would rather rebuke for his unkindness than pity for any accident.

Ross. His absence shows that he does not care to keep his promise. Will your Majesty honour us with your company?

Macb. All the chairs are occupied.

Len But here is a seat reserved for you?

Macb Where?

Len. Here, my lord. (*Macbeth sees the Ghost.*) What is it that moves you, sir?

Macb Which of you has done this?

Lords. What, my lord?

Macb. (*Addressing the Ghost*). You cannot say I killed you. Do not shake your bloody hair at me.

Ross. Gentlemen, please get up, his Majesty is not well.

Lady Macb. Sit, good friends. My husband often gets distracted thus—he has had this trouble since his youth. I pray you, sit down. The fit will soon pass off, he will be well in a moment. If

The fit is momentary; *upon a thought*[1]
He will again be well: if much you *note*[2] him,
You shall offend him, and *extend his passion*:[3]
Feed, and regard him not. Are you a man?

Macbeth. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that
Which might appal the devil.

Lady Macbeth. O *proper stuff*![4]
This is the very painting of your fear:
This is the *air-drawn*[5] dagger which, you said,
Led you to Duncan. O, these *flaws*[6] and starts,
Impostors *to*[7] true fear, would well become
A woman's story at a winter's fire,
Authorized by her grandam. Shame itself!
Why do you make such faces? When all's done,
You look but on a stool.

Macbeth. Prithee, see there! behold! look! lo! how say you?
Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.
If *charnel-houses*[8] and our graves must send
Those that we bury back, our monuments
Shall be the *maws*[9] of kites. [*Ghost disappears.*

Lady Macbeth. What, quite unmann'd in folly?

Macbeth. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady Macbeth. Fie, for shame!

Macbeth. Blood hath been shed ere now, i' the olden time,
Ere humane *statute purged the gentle weal*;[10]
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd

1. in a moment
2. notice
3. prolong his fit of agitation
4. fine nonsense
5. drawn in the air
6. gusts of passion
7. compared with
8. tombs
9. stomachs
10. Laws purged the commonwealth and made it gentle

you pay attention to him, you will irritate him and prolong his fit. Please go on with your meal and do not take notice of him (*To Macbeth*). Are you a man ?

Macb. Yes, and a bold man too—since I dare to look upon this horror, which would frighten the very devil.

Lady Macb. Nonsense ! This is the product of your frightened imagination. This is like that phantom dagger, which as you said, conducted you to Duncan's chamber. O, these sudden outbursts are nothing but false alarms and might be appropriate to a fireside story told by a woman, who had heard it from her grandmother. Shame upon you ! Why are you staring in this distracted manner. After all, you are only looking at a stool.

Macb. I pray you, see there—look ! What do you say ? Well, what do I care ? (*Addressing the Ghost*). If you can shake your head, you ought to be able to speak. If the dead bodies that are buried can come out of the graves, then it is better that they should be given to the birds of prey, whose stomachs would be their graves.

[*Ghost vanishes.*

Lady Macb. What, you are quite unnerved by your foolish fear ?

Macb. If it is true that I am standing here, it is equally true that I saw him.

Lady Macb. Shame upon you ! That you should behave thus !

Macb. Murders had been committed in the past, before laws were passed to reform society Yes, and since then, murders too revolting for the ear, have been committed. But in the past when the brains of men were dashed out they would die, and

Too terrible for the ear: the time has been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end; but now they rise again,
With twenty *mortal murders*[1] on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: this is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady Macbeth. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macbeth. I do forget:
Do not *muse*[2] at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine, fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
Would he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Re-enter Ghost.

Macbeth. Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no *speculation*[3] in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!

Lady Macbeth. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

1. deadly wounds

2. wonder

3. sight

there would be an end of the matter. But now the murdered man comes up again with twenty fatal wounds on his head and occupies the chair reserved for us. This is even stranger than such a murder.

Lady Mach My noble husband, your friends miss you at the table.

Macb. I am sorry I forget my duties as a host. Do not wonder at my conduct, my worthy friends. I have a strange weakness, which does not worry those who are familiar with me. Come, I wish love and health to you all. I will now sit down. Give me some wine, fill the glass to the brim. I now drink the health of all who are assembled at the table, and specially of Banquo, whose absence we regret. I wish he were here. Let us drink the health of all and of Banquo; I express my best wishes to all.

Lords. We assure you of our loyalty and drink your health.

Re-enter Ghost

Macb. Get out! Get out of my sight. Let the earth conceal you beneath its surface. Your bones have no marrow, and your blood is cold. The eyes with which you stare at me have a vacant look and are devoid of expression.

Lady Macb. Consider this, O good lords, as something habitual; it is nothing strange. Only it spoils the joy of tonight's festivities.

Macbeth. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The *arm'd*[1] rhinoceros, or the *Hyrcan*[2] tiger;
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: or be alive again,
And *dare me*[3] to the desert with thy sword;
If trembling I inhabit then,[4] *protest me*[5]
The *baby of a girl.*[6] Hence, horrible shadow!
Unreal mockery,[7] hence! [*Ghost disappears.*
Why, so; *being gone*[8],
I am a man again. Pray you, sit still.

Lady Macbeth. You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting,
With most *admired disorder.*[9]

Macbeth. Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange
Even to the disposition that I owe,
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
When mine is blanch'd with fear.

Ross. What sights, my lord?

Lady Macbeth. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse,
Question enrages him: at once, good night:
Stand not upon[10] the order of your going,
But go at once.

Lennox. Good night; and better health
Attend his majesty!

1. armed defensively in its impenetrable hide
2. tiger which is known for its deadliest ferocity
3. challenge me
4. If out of terror I sulk at home then
5. denounce me
6. a girl's doll
7. imaginary mock figure of man
8. It having disappeared
9. disorder which excites wonder
10. Do not be particular about

Macb. I am bold enough to do all that a man can dare. (*Addressing the Ghost*). If you come like the fierce Russian bear or the armed rhinoceros, or the Hyrcanian tiger—if you assume any shape except that of the dead Banquo, I shall not tremble to look upon you. Or be alive again and challenge me to fight with you in a solitary place. If then I show fear, call me the doll of a girl. Get away, horrible spectre get away, you false shadow of a man. (*Ghost vanishes*). Well, it has disappeared, and I am my own self again. (*To the lords*). I pray, sit quietly.

Lady Macb. You have spoilt the joy and broken up the meeting with this strange confusion.

Macb Can such things happen and pass unnoticed, like a piece of summer cloud without arousing any wonder? You make me doubt my courage, when I find that you, after beholding such sights, retain the natural bloom on your cheeks when my own are white with fear.

Ross. What sight, my lord?

Lady Macb. I pray you, please do not speak to him, for his fit is growing worse. If he is questioned now, he will get irritated. I wish you good night at once. You need not observe the formality of leaving the hall in due order; please go at once.

Lennox. Good-night. May the king soon get well.

Lady Macbeth. A kind good night to all!
[*Exeunt all except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*

Mac. It will have blood; they say blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move and trees to speak:
Augures[1] and understood *relation*[2] have
By *magot-pies*[3] and *choughs*[4] and *rooks*[5] brought forth
The secret'st *man of blood*.[6] *What is the night?*[7]

Lady Macbeth. Almost *at odds with morning*,[8] which is which.

Macb. How say'st thou, that Macduff *denies his person*[9]
At our great bidding?

Lady Macbeth. Did you send to him, sir?

Macbeth. I hear it by the way; but I will send:
There's not a one of them but in his house
I keep a servant *fee'd*.[10] I *will*[11] to-morrow—
And *betimes*[12] I will—to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst. For mine own *good*,[13]
All causes shall give way: I *am*[14] in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as *go o'er*:[15]
Strange things I have in head, that will to hand;
Which must be acted ere they may be *scann'd*[16]

1. science of divination
2. *i.e*, relation between the signs and they refer to
3. 4. 5. names of birds
6 murderer
7. what time of the night is it?
8. time which may well be taken for morning
9. refuses to present himself
10 in my pay
11. *i.e.*, will go
12. Early
13. Interest
14. have
15. go on to the end
16. examined closely

Lady Macb. Good-night to you all.

[*Exeunt all except Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.*

Macb. The Ghost is thirsting for revenge. It is said that a murder cannot go unavenged. Even stones and trees are said to betray the murderer. Soothsayers, interpreting omens correctly, have helped to find out murderers by observing birds and their cries. What is the hour of the night ?

Lady Macb. The night is so far advanced that it is difficult to say whether it is night or dawn.

Macb. What do you think of the fact that Macduff has refused to attend the banquet even at my invitation.

Lady Macb. Did you send for him ?

Macb. I have only learnt it incidentally ; I shall soon send a messenger. There is not one lord, in whose house I have not got a paid agent. To-morrow I shall go early to the weird sisters. I shall make them divulge more secrets, for I am resolved to do the worst even by the worst means. To safeguard my interests, I shall trample on every scruple. I have proceeded so far in this murderous business that even if I do not go any further, turning back would be as difficult as going forward. I am contemplating strange plans, which I shall put into execution, and they must be executed before they are closely examined.

Lady Macbeth. You lack the *season*[1] of all natures, sleep.

Macb. Come, we'll to sleep. My *strange and self-abuse*[2]
Is the *initiate fear*[3] that wants hard use :
We are yet but young in deed. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V. *A heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches, *meeting* Hecate.

First Witch. Why, how now, Hecate! you look angerly.

Hecate. Have I not reason, *beldams*[4] as you are,
Saucy and overbold ? How did you dare
To trade and traffic with Macbeth
In riddles and affairs of death ;
And I, the mistress of your charms,
The *close*[5] contriver of all harms,
Was never call'd to bear my part,
Or show the glory of our art ?
And, which is worse, all you have done
Hath been but for a *wayward son*,[6]
Spiteful and wrathful , who, as others do,
Loves for his own ends, not for you.
But make amends now : get you gone,
And at the pit of *Acheron*[7] a River of hell
Meet me i' the morning : thither he
Will come to know his destiny :
Your vessels and your spells provide,
Your charms and every thing beside.
I am for the air ; this night I'll spend

1. in the sence of that which preserves
2. strange delusion
3. fear which accompanies crime at the outset
4. bags (an urgly old woman)
5. secret
6. a man of perverse disposition refers to Macbeth
7. some gloomy spot

Lady Macb. You lack sleep, which refreshes all.

Macb. Come, we shall go to sleep. My strange self-delusions are due to my own fear, which haunts a novice and which is removed by experience. We are yet new to this criminal career.

SCENE V. *A Heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three WITCHES, *meeting* HECATE.

First Witch. Well, Hecate. You look angry.

Hec. Have I no reason to be angry with you, who are so impudent and audacious? How did you dare to deal with Macbeth in fatal ambiguities? And I, who am the mistress of all charms and secret designer of all evils, was not even called to take my part in that affair or show the glory of our trade? And, what is worse, you have done all this for a headstrong fellow, who is malicious and ill-tempered, and who, like others, does not like you but only seeks his own end. But now you rectify your past error. Go now and meet me in the morning at the pit of Acheron, there he will come to know his future. See that you have all the articles necessary for your purpose—cauldrons, incantations, charms and every other thing. I am now going up in the air. I shall devote myself to a sinister and wicked

to set right, to purify, to correct.

Unto a dismal and a fatal end :
Great business must be wrought ere noon :
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop profound ;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground :
And that, distill'd by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites
As by the strength of their illusion
Shall draw him on to his *confusion* :[1]
He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace and fear :
And you all know *security*[2]
Is mortals' chiefest enemy.

[*Music and a song within,* "Come away, come away," &c.

Hark ! I am call'd ; my little spirit, see,
Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit.*

First Witch. Come, let's make haste ; she'll soon be back again. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Forres. The palace.*

Enter LENNOX *and another* LORD.

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts,
Which can interpret further : only, I say,
Things have been strangely *borne.*[3] The gracious Duncan
Was pitied of Macbeth, marry, he was dead :
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late ;
Whom, you may say, if't please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled : men must not walk too late.

1. ruin

2. *i.e.*, sense of security or overconfidence

3. managed

business. I shall have to finish this important business before noon. A drop of vaporous mist is hanging at the edge of the moon, and I shall catch it before it falls to the ground. And when I have distilled it by magic artifice, it will raise such spirits, as will deceive Macbeth and lure him to destruction He will defy destiny, scorn death and entertain hopes, which are contrary to the dictates of prudence, duty and fear. And you all know that excessive self-confidence is man's chief enemy. [*Music and a song*]. Listen, I am called, see my familiar spirit is sitting on a misty cloud and waiting for me.

First Witch. Come, let us make haste, she will soon come back. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Forres. Before the palace*

Enter LENNOX *and another* LORD

Lennox. My former speeches appear to have set you thinking, and now you will be able to understand my meaning fully. I have only to say that things have happened very strangely. Macbeth expressed deep pity for Duncan, but then Duncan was already dead. And the bold Banquo was out at a late hour of the night, and it may be said that Fleance killed him because Fleance fled. So no man must walk out late in the night. Every one must

Who cannot want the thought,[1] how monstrous
It was for Malcolm and for Donalbain
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight
In pious rage the two *delinquents*[2] tear,
That were the slaves of drink and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive
To hear the men deny't. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think
That, had he Duncan's sons under his *key*[3]—
As, an't please heaven, he shall not—they should find
What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace! for from *broad words*,[4] and 'cause he fail'd
His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear.
Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell
Where he *bestows himself*?[5]

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the *due of birth*[6]
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the *malevolence*[7] of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect: thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
That, by the help of these—with Him above
To *ratify*[8] the work—we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,

1. who cannot help thinking?
2. criminals
captive
3. control
4. outspoken language
5. has taken up his abode
6. rightfull inheritance
7. enmity or ill-will
8. sanction

necessarily think that it was most unnatural for Malcolm and Donalbain to kill their kind father—a most disgraceful thing indeed! O, how deeply it pained Macbeth! and therefore in a fit of virtuous indignation he killed the two servants who were victims of drink and sleep. That was certainly very noble of Macbeth—and also very prudent—for any man would be filled with deep rage to hear the men protest their innocence. So I must say that Macbeth has managed everything very well. And I also think that if he could manage to get the sons of Duncan in the prison—as by God's grace, he shall not—he would have taught them what an evil thing it was for them to kill their father, and he would have taught Fleance too: (*i.e.*, Macbeth would have put them to death). But we need not talk so openly; Macduff has incurred the displeasure of the king because he talked freely and kept away from the feast given by Macbeth. Sir, can you say where he is staying now?

Lord. Malcolm, the eldest son of Duncan, who has been deprived of his birthright by Macbeth, is now staying at the English court and is treated so kindly by the virtuous Edward that he has not lost his dignity in any way in spite of his misfortune. Macduff has also gone to England to solicit the pious king to secure the support of the Earl of Northumberland and the brave Siward,—so that with their help and with God's help—we may eat our meals in safety, sleep peacefully, make our feasts and

Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,
Do faithful homage, and receive *free honours*;[1]
All which we pine for now: and this report
Hath so *exasperate*[2] the king that he
Prepares for some attempt of war.

Lennox. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did: and with an absolute "Sir, not I,"
The *cloudy*[3] messenger turns me his back,
And hums, as who should say, "You'll rue the time
That *clogs*[4] me with this answer."

Lennox. And that well might
Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
Fly to the court of England and unfold
His message ere he come; that a swift blessing
May soon return to this our *suffering country*[5]
Under a hand accursed!

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A cavern. In the middle, a boiling caldron.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

First Witch. Thrice the *brinded*[6] cat hath mew'd.

Second Witch. Thrice and once the *hedge-pig*[7] whined

Third Witch. Harpier cries "'tis time, 'tis time."

1. honours freely bestowed
2. make angry
3. sullen
4. burdens
5. *i.e.*, country suffering under
6. stripped
7. hog

banquets safe against murderers' knives, render homage to the lawful king and win and enjoy honours freely ; these are things, which we lack now and for which we all pine The news of Macduff's flight has so enraged Macbeth that he is making preparations for war.

Lennox. Did he send for Macduff?

Lord. Yes he did. Macduff flatly refused to come and the gloomy messenger came back, muttering to himself as if he was saying, " you will regret that you send me back with this negative answer ".

Lennox. And that is a sufficient reason why Macduff should be very cautious and keep as far as away from Macbeth as he wisely can. May some good angel fly to the court of England and communicate his message to the king of England before he reaches there, so that our unhappy country, which is now groaning under the rule of this tyrant, may soon be delivered from this tyranny.

Lord. I also send my prayers with Macduff

Exeunt.

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A Cavern In the middle, a boiling cauldron.*

Thunder. Enter the THREE WITCHES

First Witch. The streaked cat has cried thrice

Sec. Witch. The hedge-pig has cried four times.

Third Witch. Harpier is always crying that it is time for us to begin.

First Witch. Round about the caldron go;
In the poison'd entrails throw.
Toad, that under cold stone
Days and nights hast thirty-one
Swelter'd[1] venom sleeping got,
Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Second Witch. *Fillet*[2] of a *fenny snake*;[3]
In the caldron boil and bake,
Eye of *newt*[4] and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork[5] and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and *howlet's*[6] wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Third Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf,
Witches *mummy*,[7] *maw*[8] and *gulf*[9]
Of the *ravin'd*[10] salt-sea shark,
Root of hemlock *digg'd*[11] i' the dark,
Liver of *blaspheming*[12] Jew,
Gall of goat, and *slips of yew*[13]
Sliver'd[14] in the moon's eclipse,
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips,
Finger of birth-strangled babe
Ditch-deliver'd[15] by a *drab*,[16]
Make the gruel thick and *slab*[17]:
Add thereto a tiger's *chaudron*,[18]
For the ingredients of our caldron.

1. caused to exude by heat
2. slice
3. snake picked up from fen or a masrhy place
4. a kind of lizard
5. the froked tongue of the adder or snake
6. =owlet
7 dried dead body
8. stomach
9. gullet
10. ravenous
11. dug (past participle)
12. speaking impiously (of Christ)
13. branches of yew (a tree)
14. torn off
15. thrown in the ditch
16. a woman of loose character
17. sticky; slimy
18. entrails of a beast

First Witch. Go round the cauldron and throw into it the poisoned intestines of animals. Boil first in the charmed cauldron the toad, which has slept under cold stone for thirty-one days and nights and has exuded poison like sweat.

All. Let us redouble our labour and efforts. Let the fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Sec. Witch. Boil and fry in the pot thin slices of the snake's flesh, the eye of a newt, the toe of a frog, the wool of a bat, the tongue of a dog, the forked tongue of an adder,the sting of a glow-worm, the leg of a lizard, the wing of an owl. Let us make a powerful charm by preparing as infernal broth out of these things.

Third Witch. Make the broth thick by adding the following—the scale of a dragon, the tooth of a wolf, the preserved dead body of a witch, the stomach of a shark, the root of the hemlock dug up at night, the liver of an unbelieving Jew, the bile of a goat, slices of the yew tree cut off during a lunar eclipse, the nose of a Turk, the lips of a Tartar, the figure of an illegitimate babe, given birth to in a ditch by a whore : and then put into the cauldron the entrails of a tiger.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.

Second Witch. Cool it with a *baboon's*[1] blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE

Hecate. O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains:
And now about the caldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

[*Music and song,* "Black spirits," &c.
[*Hecate retires*

Second Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes:
Open, locks,
Whoever knocks!

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags!
What is't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
Howe'er you come to know it, answer me:
Though you untie the winds and let them fight
Against the churches; though the *yesty*[2] waves
Confound[3] and swallow *navigation*[4] up;
Though *bladed*[5] corn be *lodged*[6] and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces and pyramids do slope

1. a kind of monkey
2. foaming
3. destroy
4. stands for ships
5. unripe
6. laid low

Sec. Witch. After the broth is prepared, cool it with the blood of a baboon; then the charm becomes strong and effective.

Enter HECATE

Hecate. You have done well. I admire your efforts. I assure every one of you shall share in the reward. Now you dance and sing round the cauldron, like fairies in a circle—thus imparting magic efficacy to all that you put in the caludron.

[*Music and Song.*

Sec. Witch. From the itching sensation in my thumb, I understand that some wicked creature is coming this way. If anybody knocks, let the door be opened.

Enter MACBETH

Macb. You wicked, mysterious witches, what are you doing?

All. A deed that has no name.

Macb. I charge you, in the name of your magic—and I do not care how you acquire your prophetic powers—answer me. Though you let loose the winds that blow against churches, though the foaming waters of the sea shatter and sink ships, though the green corn be beaten and mighty trees uprooted, though castles tumble down on the heads of sentinels, though mighty edifices and palaces

Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's *germens*[1] tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken; answer me
To what I ask you.

First Witch. Speak.

Second Witch. Demand.

Third Witch. We'll answer.

First Witch. Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,
Or from our masters?

Macbeth. Call 'em, let me see 'em.

First Witch. Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her *nine farrow*;[2] grease that's *sweaten*[3]
From the murderer's *gibbet*[4] throw
Into the flame.

All. Come, high or low;
Thyself and office deftly show!

Thunder. First Apparition: *an armed Head.*

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,—

First Witch. He knows thy thought:
Hear his speech, but say thou naught.

First Apparition. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff:
Beware the thane of Fife. Dismiss me: enough.
[*Descends.*

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks; Thou hast harp'd my fear aright: but one word more,—

First Witch. He will not be commanded: here's another, More *potent*[5] than the first.

1. germs or seeds
2. her litter of nine pigs
3. fallen in sweat
4. scaffold
5. powerful

topple down to the ground, though the seeds of life in nature be completely destroyed—yet answer my question.

First Witch. Speak.

Sec. Witch. Ask.

Third Witch. We shall answer your question.

First Witch. Tell us whether you would have your answer from us or from our masters.

Macb. Call your masters; let me see them.

First Witch. Pour into the cauldron the blood of a sow that has devoured her nine pigs, and into the fire the fat that oozed out of the gallows in which a murderer had been hanged.

All. Appear before us, both those who are great and those who are small. Show yourselves and then show your powers.

Thunder. First Apparition in the shape of an armed Head appears

Macb. Tell me, your mysterious being.—

First Witch. He knows your thought. Hear him, but do not speak to him.

First Apparition. Macbeth, take care of Macduff, take care of the thane of Fife. Let me go. I have spoken enough. [*Descends.*

Macb. Thank you for your warning; whoever you may be. You have exactly hit upon my fear, but I have one more question to ask you.

First Witch. He will not be ordered. Here is another apparition, more powerful than the former.

Thunder. Second Apparition : *a bloody Child.*

Second Apparition. Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth !

Macbeth. Had I three ears, I'ld hear thee.

Second Apparition. Be bloody, bold, and resolute ; laugh to scorn
The power of man, for none of woman born
Shall harm Macbeth. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. Then live, Macduff : what need I fear of thee ?
But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate : thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

Thunder. Third Apparition : *a Child crowned, with a tree in his hand.*

What is this,
That rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby-brow the round
And top of sovereignty ?

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

Third Apparition. Be lion-mettled, proud ; and take no care
Who *chafes,*[1] who *frets,*[2] or where conspires are :
Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macbeth. That will never be :
Who can *impress*[3] the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root ? Sweet *bodements* ![4] good !

1. *i.e.*, against your rule
2. rages
3. press into service
4. happy predictions

Thunder. Second Apparition *in the shape of a bloody child appears.*

Second App. Macbeth, Macbeth, Macbeth !

Macb. Speak, I am burning to hear you.

Second App. Be bloody, bold, and determined. Hold in contempt the power of man, for no one born of woman can ever harm you. [*Descends.*

Macb. Then let Macduff live—why should I fear him ? Yet I shall make myself doubly sure and bind over fate by a pledge. I must slay him, lest fear should make a coward of me, only then I would be able to sleep peacefully in spite of all dangers.

Thunder. Third Apparition *in the shape of a crowned Child.*

What is this apparition that comes like the son of a king, wearing a crown that is the symbol of kingship ?

All. Listen, but do not speak to it.

Third App. Be bold and daring, and never bother who is annoyed or discontented or who plots against you. You will never be vanquished until the great wood of Birnam moves up to the hill of Dunsinane.

Macb. That can never happen. None can ever compel a forest to do service, or command a tree to uproot itself. Sweet prediction, I am quite safe. Rebels never dare to rise against me, till the wood

Rebellion's head, rise never till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-placed Macbeth
Shall live the *lease of nature*,[1] pay his *breath*[2]
To time and *mortal custom*.[3] Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing : tell me, if your art
Can tell so much : shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom ?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macbeth. I will be satisfied : deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you ! Let me know.
Why sinks that caldron ? and what noise is this ? [*Hautboys*.[4]

First Witch. Show !

Second Witch. Show !

Third Witch. Show !

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart ;
Come like shadows, so depart !

A show of Eight Kings,[5] *the last with a glass in his hand* ; Banquo's Ghost *following*.

Macbeth. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo ; down !
Thy crown does *sear*[6] mine eyeballs : and thy hair,
Thou other *gold-bound*[7] brow, is like the first :
A third is like the former. Filthy hags !
Why do you show me this ? A fourth ? Start, eyes !
What, will the line stretch out to the crack of doom ?
Another yet ? A seventh ? I'll see no more :
And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass
Which shows me many more; and some I see

1. natural term of life
2. *i.e.*, life
3. death
4. a musical instrument
5. scotch kings, ancestors of James I, king of England
6. burn
7. crowned with a golden crown

of Birnam rises, and the royal Macbeth shall live the normal span of life and die only when his time expires, as it expires in the case of all. Yet I am eager to know one thing; tell me, if your magic power enables you to do so, whether Banquo's descendants will ever reign in Scotland.

All. Do not wish to know more.

Macb. I must know it. If you refuse to answer, may you be damned eternally. Tell me. Why is that cauldron goinig down? And what is this noise due to?

First Witch. Let him see.

Sec. Witch. Let him see.

All. Let him see with his eyes and feel pain in his heart. O, come like shadows and depart like shadows.

A show of eight Kings, *the last with a glass in his hand, Banquo's Ghost following.*

Macb. (*Addressing the first King*). You are very much like the ghost of Banquo. Go away. Your crown blinds my eyes. (*Addressing the second King*). And you, the second one, who wear the gold crown, your hair is like that of the first. (*Addressing the Witches*). You ugly creatures, why do yon show me all this? (*Seeing the other kings following each other*). Is there a fourth? I cannot bear the sight of it. That's the fifth—will the line of Banquo extend even till the day of judgment? Now that is the sixth and that is the seventh. I shall see no more. And yet the eighth appears, who carries a mirror, which shows a number of his successors.

That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry ;
Horrible sight ! Now I see 'tis true ;
For the *blood-bolter'd*[1] Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his. What, is this so ?

First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so : but why
Stands Macbeth thus amazedly ?
Come, sisters, cheer we up his *sprites*,[2]
And show the best of our delights :
I'll charm the air to give a sound,
While you perform your antic round ;
That this great king may kindly say
Our duties did his welcome pay.[3]

[*Music. The Witches dance, and then vanish, with Hecate.*

Macb. Where are they ? Gone ? Let this pernicious hour
Stand *aye*[4] accursed in the calendar !
Come in, without there !

Enter LENNOX.

Lennox. What's your grace's will ?

Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters ?

Lennox. No, my lord.

Macbeth. Came they not by you ?

Lennox. No, indeed, my lord.

Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride,
And damn'd all those that trust them ! I did hear
The galloping of horse : who was't came by ?

1. with his hair matted with thick blood
2. spirits
3. the courtesies we showed him repaid his hearty welcome
4. ever

And I see some of them carry in their hands two balls and three sceptres. What a horrible sight it is! Now I see that the prediction that Banquo's descendants will be kings is true, for Banquo, with his hair matted with blood, smiles and points to these as his descendants. (*Apparitions vanish away*). What, is it really so?

First Witch. Yes sir, all this is true. But why are you standing confused in this way? Come sisters; let us refresh his spirits and show him our best entertainment; I shall charm the air and make it produce sweet music; and you perform a fantastic dance, so that this great king may say that we rendered homage to him when he came to visit us. [*Music. The witches dance and then vanish.*

Macb. Who are they? Have they vanished? Let this evil hour be for ever cursed in the calendar. Come in, you who stand outside?

Enter LENNOX.

Len. What is your Majesty's pleasure?

Macb. Did you see the weird sisters?

Len. No, my lord.

Macb. Did they not pass you when they went away?

Len. I am sure they did not.

Macb. Let the air through which they travel be pestilential, and let those who trust them be accursed. I heard the sound of galloping horses. Who are those riders?

Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word Macduff is fled to England.

Macbeth. Fled to England !

Lennox. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth. Time, thou *anticipatest*[1] my dread exploits :
The *flighty*[2] purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it : from this moment
The very *firstlings*[3] of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now,
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done :
The castle of Macduff I will surprise ;
Seize upon Fife ; give to the edge o' the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace him in his line. No boasting like a fool ;
This deed I'll do before this purpose cool :
But no more sights !—Where are these gentlemen ?
Come, bring me where they are [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Fife.* MACDUFF'S *castle.*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, *her* SON, *and* ROSS.

Lady Macb What had he done, to make him fly the land ?

Ross. You must have patience, madam.

Lady Macduff. He had none :
His flight was madness : when our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors.

Ross. You know not
Whether it was his wisdom or his fear.

1. preventest

2. fleeting

3. the first fruit

Len. It is two or three messengers who have brought the news that Macduff has fled to England.

Macb. What! Macduff has fled to England.

Len. Yes, my good Lord.

Macb. *[To himself].* Time, you steal a march over me and prevent me from carrying out my dreadful plans. Resolutions are useless unless they are quickly executed. Henceforth I am resolved to carry out my purpose as soon as it is formed in the mind. And even now to consummate my thoughts in deeds, let me put into execution what I have thought : I shall storm the castle of Macduff, take possession of Fife (the estate of Macduff), and kill his wife, children and all those who have the misfortune to be related to him. I am not boasting like a fool—I will do it before my resolution cools down. I shall have no more of witches and their shows. Where are these messengers? Come, take me where they are.

SCENE II. *Fife. Macduff's castle.*

Enter LADY MACDUFF *her* SON *and* ROSS

Lady Macd. What crime did he commit that he fled from the country ?

Ross. Please be patient madam.

Lady Macd. But he had no patience. His flight was an act of madness, for when our deeds are not treacherous, our fears make us out to be traitors.

Ross. You do not know whether it was his wisdom or his fear that prompted his flight.

Lady Macduff. Wisdom ! to leave his wife, to leave his babes,
His mansion and his *titles*[1] in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not ;
He *wants*[2] the *natural touch*[3]: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love ;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Ross. My dearest *coz*,[4]
I pray you, school yourself : but for your husband,
He's noble, wise, judicious; and best knows
The *fits o' the season*[5] I dare not speak much further :
But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves ; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear,
But float upon a wild and violent sea
Each way and move. I take my leave of you :
Shall not be long but I'll be here again :
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before. My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you !

Lady Macduff. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Ross. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace and your discomfort :
I take my leave at once. [*Exit.*

1. possessions
2. lacks
3. natural affection
4. cousin
5. the vident and capricious disorders of the time

Lady Macd. Wisdom! you call it wisdom to leave his wife and children, his houses and estates in a place, where he did not dare to stay? It is plain that he does not love us, he lacks natural affection; even the wren, the smallest of birds, will fight the owl in order to save her young ones in the nest. It is quite obvious that he does not love us at all and was prompted wholly by his fear, since his flight is against all dictates of reason.

Ross. My dearest cousin, I pray you to control your feelings. As regards your husband, he is noble, wise, prudent and is fully conversant with the needs of the time. I cannot say anything more. The time is bad, for we may be regarded as traitors, though we do not know why. Our fear makes us believe every idle report, and yet we do not know what we are afraid of. Surrounded by dangers on all sides, we are like creatures floating on a violent sea and tossed about by every wave. I leave you now. I shall not be long away but come back soon. Even the worst things will come to an end or they will turn better and come back to their former state.

[*Addresing Macduff's son*]. My sweet cousin, may God bless you.

Lady Macd. He has a father, and yet he is fatherless.

Ross. I am such a fool that if I stay longer, I shall give way to tears, which will disgrace me and distress you. I must leave you at once. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. Sirrah, your father's dead:
And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

Lady Macduff. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

Lady Macduff. Poor bird! thou'ldst never fear the net nor *lime*,[1]
The pitfall nor the *gin*.[2]

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they *are not set for*.[3]
My father is not dead, for all your saying.

Lady Macduff. Yes, he is dead: how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

Lady Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

Lady Macduff. Thou speak'st with all thy wit, and yet, i' faith,
With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macduff. *Ay, that he was*.[4]

Son. What is traitor?

Lady Macduff. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all a traitors that do so?

Lady Macduff. Every one that does so is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all *be*[5] hanged that swear and lie?

1. bird lime
2. snare
3. trapped
4. meaning traitor to herself
5. are

Lady Macd Poor child, your father is dead. What will you do now ? How will you live ?

Son. I shall live as birds live, mother.

Lady Macd. What, will you live on flies and worms ?

Son. I mean I shall live on whatever food I get and that is what the birds do.

Lady Macd. Poor bird ! you are innocent and do not even know the existence of the net or the line, the trap or the snare. You will be easily caught in them.

Son. Why should I fear these traps mother ? Men do not try to catch small birds like myself. And my father is not dead, in spite of all that you may say.

Lady Macd. Yes he is dead, what will you do without your father ?

Son. Nay, what will you do without your husband ?

Lady Macd. Why, I can purchase twenty husbands anywhere

Son. You will then buy them to sell again.

Lady Macd. You speak intelligently enough, but your intelligence seems to be too much for a child of your age.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

Lady Macd. Yes, he was a traitor (*i.e., traitor to his love for me*).

Son. What is a traitor, mother ?

Lady Macd. Why, one who swears a vow, and then breaks it.

Son. Is everyone who does so a traitor ?

Lady Macd. Everyone.

Son. And should eveyone, who swears vows and breaks them, be hanged ?

Lady Macduff. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

Lady Macduff. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools; for there are liars and swearers enow to beat the honest men, and hang up them.

Lady Macduff. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'ld weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

Lady Macduff. Poor prattler, how thou talk'st!

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,
Though in your state of honour I am *perfect.*[1]
I doubt some danger does approach you nearly:
If you will take a *homely*[2] man's advice,
Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage:
To do worse to you were *fell*[3] cruelty,
Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve you!
I dare abide no longer. [*Exit.*

Lady Macduff. Whither should I fly?
I have done no harm. But I remember now
I am in this earthly world; where to do harm
Is often laudable, to do good sometime
Accounted dangerous folly: why then, alas,
Do I put up that womanly defence,
To say I have done no harm?

1. perfeclty aware
2. simple
3. terrible

Lady Macd. Yes, everyone.

Son. Who are to hang them ?

Lady Macd. Why, the honest people.

Son. Then those who swear and lie are fools, for there are enough liars in the world to beat the honest men and hang them.

Lady Macd. Now, may God protect you, poor dear ! But how will you live without your father ?

Son. He is not dead ; for if he were, you would weep for him. And if you do not weep, it is a hopeful sign that you would marry again and I shall have a new father.

Lady Macd. Poor talker, how cleverly you talk !

Enter MESSENGER

Mess. May God bless you, fair lady. I am not known to you, but I am perfectly acquainted with your high rank. I am afraid you are in imminent danger. If you take the advice of a poor man, leave this place. Go away with your children. I am afraid I behave like a rude fellow when I frighten you in this way ; but to let something worse befall you would be a cruelty, but that is what is coming to you and soon. May God protect you ! I dare not stay any longer. [*Exit.*

Lady Macd. Where should I go ? I have not done any wrong. But I remember that I am in a wicked world, where the doing of wrong is praised and where doing good to others is regarded as dangerous and foolish. Why then should I put up this womanly plea that I have done no wrong ?

Enter Murderers.

What are these faces?

First Murderer. Where is your husband?

Lady Macduff. I hope, in no place so unsanctified
Where such as thou mayst find him.

First Murderer. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou liest, thou *shag-ear'd*[1] villain!

First Murderer. What, you egg! [*Stabbing him.*
Young fry of treachery![2]

Son. He has kill'd me, mother:
Run away, I pray you! [*Dies.*

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying* "Murder!" *and pursued by the Murderers.*

SCENE III. *England. Before the* King's *palace.*

Enter MALCOLM *and* MACDUFF.

Malcolm. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macduff. Let us rather
Hold fast the *mortal*[3] sword, and like *good*[4] men
Bestride[5] our down-fall'n *birthdom*:[6] each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.[7]

Malcolm. What I believe, I'll *wail*:[8]
What know, believe; and what I can redress,

1. rough-haired
2. offspring of a treacherous person
3. death dealing
4. brave
5. stand up
6. native land
7. similar cries of pain
8. *i.e.*, bewail

Enter MURDERERS

Who are these horrible men?

First Murd. Where is your husband?

Lady Macd. I hope he is in no place so accursed that villains like you can enter there and find him.

First Murd. He is a traitor.

Son. You lie, you rough-haired villain.

First Murd. What, you young rascal!—you little traitor. [*Stabs the boy*].

Son. He has killed me' mother. Fly away, I pray you.

[*Exit Lady Macduff, crying Murder, and pursued by the Murderers.*

SCENE III. *England.*

Enter MALCOLM AND MACDUFF

Mal. Let us find some solitary place and there weep and relieve our hearts.

Mal. Let us rather stoutly take up arms and like brave soldiers save the land of our birth, which is now plunged in misery. Every morning sees new widows and new orphans; every morning there arise new lamentations, which resound in the sky, so that it seems as though the sky sympathised with Scotland and uttered similar cries of sorrow.

Mal. I shall lament only those sorrows which I believe, and I believe only what I know to be true. And I shall try to remedy these sorrows to the best

As I shall find the time to friend, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so perchance.
This tyrant, whose *sole*[1] name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have loved him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but something
You may deserve of him through me, and *wisdom*[2]
To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb
To appease an angry god.

Macduff. I am not treacherous.

Malcolm. But Macbeth is.
A good and virtuous nature may *recoil*[3]
In an imperial charge.[4] But I shall crave your pardon;
That which you are, my thoughts cannot *transpose*:[5]
Angels are bright still, though the *brightest fell*:[6]
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must *still*[7] look *so*.[8]

Macduff. I have lost my hopes.

Mal. Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
Why in that *rawness*[9] left you wife and child,
Those precious *motives*,[10] those strong knots of love,
Without leave-taking? I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be *your dishonours*,[11]
But mine own safeties: you may be *rightly just*,[12]
Whatever I shall think.

1. mere
2. it is wisdom
3. may swerve from virtue
4. when charged with execution of a king's command
5. change
6. *i.e.*, Lucifer or the devil
7. always
8. *i.e.*, gracious
9. haste
10. *i.e.*, motives of affection
11. thoughts that dishonour you
12. honest if rightly just

of my powers, when I find the right opportunity. All that you have told me may be true. This tyrant, the very mention of whose name offends our tongue, was once considered an honest man. You yourself used to love him, and he has not yet done you any harm. It is true I am young, but you may expect to get some reward from Macbeth by betraying me and, it is certainly an act of prudence to sacrifice a poor lamb to appease an angry god.

Macd. I am not treacherous.

Mal. But Macbeth is. Even an honest man may fall away from the path of virtue under the orders of the King. But I beg your pardon—Your real character cannot change by my suspicions. Angels yet are glorious, though the highest among them fell. Though ugly things may wear the mask of beauty, yet beauty will remain beautiful all the same.

Macd. I have lost all my hopes of saving my country.

Mal. Perhaps that is due to the same reason which prompted me to suspect you. Why did you leave your wife and child in such hot haste? How is it that you did not even take leave of them, who are the strongest motives of your action and who are bound to you by the strongest ties of affection? I pray you do not take these suspicions of mine as signifying anything dishonourable to you; I am suspicious only because I look to my personal safety. You may be perfectly honest in spite of all my suspicions.

Macduff. Bleed, bleed, poor country !
Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dare not check thee ! wear thou thy wrongs,
The title is *affeer'd*[1] ! Fare thee well, lord :
I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East *to boot*.[2]

Malcolm. Be not offended :
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke ;
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds : I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right ;
And here from gracious *England*[3] have I offer
Of goodly thousands : but, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before,
More suffer and more sundry ways than ever,
By[4] him that shall succeed.

Macduff. What should he be ?

Malcolm. It is myself I mean : in whom I know
All the *particulars*[5] of vice so grafted
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compared
With my *confineless*[6] harms.

1. confirmed
2. in addition
3. *i.e.*, from king of England
4. through him
5. particular forms of vice
6. unlimited

Macd. Our poor wretched country must suffer then and the great tyrant will secure his power, now that good men are not bold enough to check him. He will enjoy the fruits of his misdeeds; his right to the throne is now established. Farewell, my lord, I would not be a traitor that you suspect me to be, for all the lands in Scotland and the rich Eastern countries to the bargain.

Mal. Please do not take offence, I have not spoken thus to you simply because I suspect you. I do believe that the country is suffering under the rule of the tyrant; the people are no doubt in great distress and every day new outrages are committed. I think also that many persons will champion my cause; and the King of England has offered to me the services of several thousands of soldiers. Notwithstanding all this when I have overthrown the tyrant or slain him, my unfortunate country will groan under greater wrong, suffer more and in more varied ways than it has suffered before, under the new ruler, who will succeed.

Macd. What kind of man would be he?

Mal. I refer to myself. I know that there are deep-rooted in my character so many vices that when they manifest themselves, even the wicked Macbeth will appear as pure as snow and the country will regard him as a lamb, when compared with me with my boundless wickedness.

Macduff. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell can come a devil more damn'd
In evils to *top*[1] Macbeth.

Malcolm. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden,[2] malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: but there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: and my desire
All *continent*[3] impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will: better Macbeth
Than such a one to reign.

Macduff. Boundless *intemperance*[4]
In nature[5] is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you *what is yours*:[6] you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,[7]
And yet seem *cold,* the time you may so *hoodwink*[9]

Malcolm. With this, there grows
In my most *ill-composed affection*[10] such
A *stanchless*[11] avarice that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands;
Desire his jewels and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more; that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

1. surpass
2. rash, violent
3. restraining
4. dissolution
5. in its nature
6. what is your right, *i.e.*, sovereignty
7. secretly gratify your pleasures without restraint
8 temperate
9. blind or deceive
10. evil nature
11. insatiable

Macd. Even among the host of devils that inhabit the dark hell, there is not one who can surpass Macbeth in wickedness.

Mal. I admit that he is cruel, lustful, greedy, false, deceitful, whimsical, malicious—in fact he possesses every known sin. There is no end to my lustful desires. All the wives and daughters, middle-aged women and young maids would not be enough to satisfy my lust. And my hot passion would break every obstacle that opposed my will. It is better that Macbeth should reign than a profligate like myself.

Macd. Unrestrained licentiousness makes a man slave to the tyrant, desire. It has been the cause of many kings losing their thrones and being totally ruined. But do not hesitate to assume what belongs to you—*viz.*, your throne, for you may satisfy your desires fully and yet appear temperate to the outside world. We have plenty of women who will willingly offer themselves to you; you cannot be so ravenously lustful as to enjoy all who will willingly yield to you, when they find that a great person like you is inclined that way.

Mal. Along with this fault, there is in my evil nature such an insatiable greed that, if I were to be king, I would destroy all the nobles in order to possess their lands, would covet this man's treasure and that man's house. And the more I possess, the more will my greed increase, and I shall find false pretexts to quarrel with the good and loyal subjects in order to plunder their wealth.

Macduff. This avarice
Sticks deeper, grows with more pernicious root
Than *summer seeming*[1] lust, and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: yet do not fear;
Scotland hath *foisons*[2] to fill up your will
Of your mere own: all these are *portable*,[3]
With other graces weigh'd.
Malcolm. But I have none: the king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them; but abound
In the division of each several crime,
Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
Pour the *sweet milk of concord*[4] into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth.
Macduff. O Scotland, Scotland!
Malcolm. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
I am as I have spoken.
Macduff. Fit to govern!
No, not to live. O nation miserable,
With an *untitled*[5] tyrant *bloody-scepter'd*,[6]
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,
Since that the *truest issue of*[7] thy throne
By his *own interdiction*[8] stands accursed,

1. short-lived (as a summer)
2. plenteous crops
3. endurable
4. gentle influence of peace and harmony
5. usurping
6. having sceptre reeking with blood
7. rightful heir to
8. self-condemnation

Macd. Avarice is more deep-rooted and harmful than lust, which, like summer lasts for a short while, and it has been the instrument that has destroyed many kings. But you need not fear, for Scotland has plenty of wealth to satisfy your greed, and all that the country possesses is your own. All these vices can be tolerated, if they are coupled with other good qualities.

Mal. But I have no other good qualities. The kingly virtues, like justice, truthfulness, temperance, steadiness, liberty, perseverance, mercy, modesty, righteousness, courage—I do not possess any one of these virtues; on the contrary, I have in plenty every variety of every vice and commit it in various ways. Indeed, if I had the power, I would destroy all harmony in the world—confound all peace and break up all unity between man and man.

Macd. O, our country is indeed most unfortunate.

Mal. Tell me, if such a man is fit to govern. I have given you my exact character.

Macd. Fit to govern! You are not even fit to live. O miserable nation, ruled by a usurper with murderous despotism; when will you enjoy again your former prosperity, since the true owner of the realm proclaims himself a villain, and slanders his own royal blood? The late king, your father, was

And does *blaspheme*[1] *his breed*[2]? Thy royal father
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,
Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
Died[3] every day she lived. Fare thee well!
These evils thou *repeat'st upon*[4] thyself
Have banish'd me from Scotland. O my breast,
Thy hope ends here!

Malcolm. Macduff, this noble passion,
Child of[5] integrity, hath from my soul
Wiped the black *scruples*,[6] reconciled my thoughts
To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
By many of these *trains*[7] hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste: but God above
Deal between thee and me! for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction,[8] here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature. I am yet
Unknown to love, I never was forsworn,
Scarcely have coveted what was mine own,
At no time broke my faith, would not betray
The devil to his fellow, and delight
No less in truth than life: my first false speaking
Was this upon myself: what I am truly,
Is thine and my poor country's to command:

1. slander
2. race
3. *i.e.*, by daily mortification of her will
4. recounts against
5. born
6. doubt
7. artifices
8. unsay all that I have said against me

a saintly man, and the queen who gave you birth was more often praying on her knees than standing or walking on her feet, and practised stern self-denial every day of her life. Farewell. The evil things you have told me about yourself have destroyed my hopes of returning to Scotland. All the hopes that I cherished in my inmost heart, are now dashed to the ground.

Mal. Macduff, this noble emotion of yours, which is the outcome of honest sincerity, has removed all suspicions from my mind, and has confirmed my belief in your truth and honour. The wicked Macbeth has tried to get me within his power by such artifices, and now my wisdom and prudence restrain me from acting with haste and over-confidence. May God remain a witness to all that passes between us, for even now I place myself under your direction; and I withdraw all the slanders that I uttered against myself, and declare the vices and blemishes that I imputed to myself, to be altogether foreign to my character. I have not yet known woman, nor broken my oath. I have never desired to possess what does not belong to me, never broken my word of honour, and would never betray anybody. I love truth as much as I love my life. The first instance of falsehood in my life is that which I have just uttered against myself. I place myself entirely at your service and at the service of my country. Indeed, just before you

Whither indeed, before thy here-approach,
Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
Already at a point, was setting forth.
Now we'll together; and the chance of *goodness*[1]
Be *like our warranted quarrel*![2] Why are you silent?

Macduff. Such welcome and unwelcome things at once
'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Malcolm. Well, more anon. Comes the king forth, I pray you?

Doctor. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
That *stay*[3] his cure: their malady *convinces*[4]
The *great essay of art*:[5] but at his touch—
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand—
They *presently*[6] amend.

Malcolm. I thank you, doctor.
[*Exit Doctor.*

Macd. What's the disease he means?

Malcolm. 'Tis call'd the *evil*:[7]
A most miraculous work in this good king;
Which often, since *my here-remain in England*,[8]
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but *strangely-visited*[9] people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;

1. success
2. be equal to the justness of cause
3. await
4. baffles
5. all medical skill
6. at once
7. *i.e.*, kings evil or scrofula
8. my stay here in England
9. people visited (afflicted) with strange maladies

came here, old Siward with ten thousand soldiers, fully armed, was about to set out for Scotland. Now we shall go together, and may our chance of success be as good as our cause is just. Why are you silent?

Macd. It is difficult to believe this good news after such unpleasant things.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well, we shall talk on this subject later on. Doctor, please tell me whether the king is coming out.

Doctor. Yes, sir; there is a number of poor sufferers, who wait to be cured by him. Their illness baffles the best endeavours of skilled physicians. But as soon as he touches them—such is the sanctity that God has bestowed upon his touch—they are immediately cured.

[*Exit Doctor.*

Mal I thank you, doctor.

Macd. What disease does he refer to?

Mal. It is known as the king's evil. This is a most wonderful work of the pious king, which I have often seen him do during my stay here in England. He only knows how he moves the heavenly powers, but men suffering from strange afflictions, all swollen and covered with ulcers—altogether a pitiful sight and given up in despair by surgeons—are cured by him. He only hangs a gold

Hanging *a golden stamp*[1] about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy,
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That *speak*[2] him full of grace.

Macduff. See, who comes here?

Malcolm. My countryman; but yet I know him not.

Enter Ross.

Macduff. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Malcolm. I know him now: good God, betimes remove
The means that makes us strangers!

Ross. Sir, amen.

Macduff. Stands Scotland where it did?

Ross. Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rent the air
Are made, *not mark'd*;[3] where violent sorrow seems
A *modern*[4] *ecstasy*:[5] the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying or *ere*[6] they sicken.

1. a golden coin (as a charm)
2. *i.e.*, bespeak
3. not noticed, being a common occurrence
4. commonplace
5. excitement
6. before

coin about their necks while saying holy prayers to God. It is said that he bequeathes this healing power to his successor. Along with this wonderful gift, he has the divine gift of prophecy, and several other blessings surround him, which prove that he enjoys God's special favour.

Macd. See, who comes here?

Enter Ross,

Mal. He must be my countryman though I do not recognise him.

Macd. My gentle cousin, welcome.

Mal. I recognise him now. May God remove the conditions which make us fellow-countrymen strangers to each other.

Ross. So be it, sir.

Macd. Is the position in Scotland the same as when I left it?

Ross. Alas, poor country; it does not dare to think of itself. It cannot be called our mother country—it is our grave; there none but those who know nothing of what is going on, is seen to smile; though the air is rent by sights and cries of agony, no one pays heed to them; violent griefs are regarded as something ordinary, and when the funeral bell rings no one cares to enquire who has died. Good men die before the flowers on their cap have had time to wither, even before they fall sick.

Macduff. O, *relation*[1]
Too nice,[2] and yet too true !

Malcolm. What's the newest grief ?

Ross. That of an hour's age doth *hiss the speaker* ;[3]
Each minute *teems*[4] a new one.

Macduff. How does my wife ?

Ross. Why, well.

Macduff. And all my children ?

Ross. Well, too.

Macduff. The tyrant has not *batter'd*[5] at their peace ?

Ross. No ; they were well at peace when I did leave 'em.

Macduff. *Be not a niggard of your speech* :[6] how goes't ?

Ross. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have *heavily*[7] borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were *out* ;[8]
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot :
Now is the time of help ; your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To *doff*[9] their dire distresses.

Malcolm. Be't their comfort
We are coming thither : gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward and ten thousand men ;
An older and a better soldier none
That *Christendom*[10] gives out.

1. narrative or story
2. too elaborate
3. cause the speaker to be hissed (for telling something stale)
4. breeds or brings forth
5. attacked
6. speak freely
7. with a heavy heart
8. up in arms
9. do off, be rid of
10 Christian countries taken collectively

Macd. Oh, this description is minute enough and yet too true.

Mal. What is the latest story of woe.

Ross. Even a story which is an hour old, becomes so stale that the man narrating it would be hissed by the people (for telling stale news). Each minute brings a new grief.

Macd. How is my wife?

Ross. Why, well.

Macd. And all my children?

Ross. Well too.

Macd. The tyrant has not disturbed their peace?

Ross. No, they were quite at peace when I left them.

Macd. Do not give such brief answers. How are they all?

Ross. When I came here to carry the news—and I have carried it with a heavy heart indeed—there was a rumour to the effect that many good men were already up in arms, and the fact that Macbeth's troops were moving confirmed the rumour. Now is the time to help our country; your very look will induce men to join the army, make even women fight to free themselves from their frightful sufferings.

Mal. Let it give them comfort to know that we are coming. The good king of England has agreed to send to our aid the good Siward and ten thousand soldiers, and there is no more experienced and better soldier in all Christendom than Siward.

Ross. Would I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not *latch*[1] them.

Macduff. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a *fee-grief*[2]
Due to some single breast?

Ross. No mind that's honest
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

Macduff. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Ross. Let not your ears despise my tongue for ever,
Which shall *possess*[3] them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macduff. Hum! I guess at it.

Ross. Your castle *is surprised*,[4] your wife and babes
Savagely slaughter'd to relate; the manner,
Were, on the *quarry*[5] of these *murder'd deer*,[6]
To add the death of you.

Malcolm. Merciful heaven!
What, man! ne'er *pull your hat upon your brows*;[7]
Give sorrow *words*:[8] the grief that does not speak
Whispers the *o'er-fraught*[9] heart and bids it break.

Macduff. My children too?

1. catch
2. a private grief
3. acquaint
4. was taken by surprise
5. a heap of slaughtered game
6. dear ones murdered
7. *i.e.*, in order to conceal the signs of your grief
8. expression
9. laden with grief heavier than it can bear

Ross. I wish I could give equally comforting news. But I have such news to give you as had better been uttered in a solitary desert, where no man might hear it.

Macd. What do the news relate to ? Do they relate to the general condition of the country ? Or is it a particular grief of a single individual ?

Ross. Every honest man must share in that sorrow, though principally it affects you alone.

Macd. If it affects me, do not keep it from me, but let me know it at once

Ross. You should not hate me for ever for giving this news, for it is the saddest news that you have ever heard.

Macd. Ah ! I begin to guess at it.

Ross. Your castle has been taken by surprise ; your wife and baby have been brutally slain ; to tell you full details would be to kill you and thus add one more murder to those already committed.

Mal. Good heavens : what man, do not cover your face with your hat. Give vent to your sorrow ; the grief that is not expressed overloads the heart and breaks it.

Macd. My children too have been murdered ?

Ross. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

Macduff. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd too?

Ross. I have said.

Malcolm. Be comforted:
Let's make us medicines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

Macduff. He has no children. All my pretty ones?
Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?
What, all my pretty chickens and their dam
At one fell swoop?

Malcolm. *Dispute*[1] it like a man.

Macduff. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me. Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own *demerits*,[2] but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now!

Malcolm. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

1. fight with your grief

3. faults

Ross. Yes, wife, children, servants—all who were found in the house.

Macd. And I was away from home! Was my wife also killed?

Ross. I have already told you.

Mal. Take comfort. Let the thought of revenge bring relief to your sorrow.

Macd. Macbeth has no children. All my pretty children have been slain? Did you say all of them? O hellish villain? All my children? All my sweet children and their mother have been killed by one blow.

Mal. Fight your grief like a man.

Macd. I shall do so. But I must feel it like a man too. I cannot forget that there were those who were most dear to me. Did the gods look upon this horrible deed and not come down to help them? I am myself to blame—they were all killed because I was away. I am a wretched creature: they were slain for my fault, not theirs. May God give peace to their souls!

Mal. Let this calamity sharpen your spirit of revenge; turn your grief to anger; do not let your heart be dulled by sorrow—rather let it inflame your heart to take a fitting revenge.

Macduff. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue! But, gentle heavens,
Cut short all *intermission*[1]; front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

Malcolm. This tune goes manly.
Come, go we to the king; our power is ready;
Our lack is nothing but our leave: Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their[2] *instruments*.[3] Receive what cheer you may:
The night is long that never finds the day.
[*Exeunt*.

1. delay
2. set to work
3. instruments of vengeance

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Ante-room in the castle.*

Enter a Doctor of Physic *and a* Waiting-Gentlewoman.

Doctor. I have two nights *watched*[4] with you, but can perceive no truth in your report. When was it she last *walked*?[5]

Gentlewoman. Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her nightgown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper, fold it, write upon't, read it, afterwards seal it, and again return to bed; yet all this while in a most fast sleep.

Doctor. A great *perturbation*[6] in nature, to receive at once the benefit of sleep, and *do the effects of watching*![7] In this *slumbery*[8] agitation, besides her walking and other actual performances, what, at any time, have you heard her say?

4. kept watch
5. *i.e.*, in her sleep
6. confusion
7. perform those operations which belong to waking
8. slumberous

Macd. O, I could weep like a woman and shout like a boastful man. But, O kind gods, cut short the interval and bring me face to face with the devil that rules Scotland : place him within the reach of my sword ; if he then escapes, I would pardon him and may God also pardon him.

Mal. Now you speak like a man. Come, let us go to the king ; our army is ready ; all that we have to do now is to take leave of the king. The cup of Macbeth's crimes is full, and the gods are using us as instruments to punish him. Take what comfort you can—in any case the longest night also passes away, and the worst sufferings also come to an end.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Dunsinane. Anteroom in the castle.*

Enter a DOCTOR *and a* LADY IN ATTENDANCE UPON THE QUEEN.

Doct. I have kept watch over the Queen with you for two nights, but do not find any truth in your report. When was it she last walked during sleep ?

Lady. Since the king went away to fight, I have seen her get up from the bed, hurriedly put on her dressing-gown, open the drawer, take up paper, fold it and write and then read and seal it and then go back to bed—and yet all the time she was fast asleep.

Doct. It shows a great disturbance in the physical system when one should be at once enjoying sleep and doing things that can only be done in the waking moments. In this disturbed condition during her sleep, in addition to walking and other things done by her, what have you heard her say ?

Gentle. That, sir, which I will not *report after her.*[1]

Doctor. You may to me; and 'tis most meet you should.

Gentlewoman. Neither to you nor any one; having no witness to confirm my speech. Lo you, here she comes!

Enter LADY MAC ETH, *with a taper.*

This is her very *guise*,[2] and, upon my life, fast asleep.
Observe her; stand close.

Doctor. How came she by that light?

Gentlewoman. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doctor. You see, her eyes are open.

Gentlewoman. Ay, but their sense is shut.

Doctor. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gentlewoman. It is an *accustomed*[3] action with her, to seem thus washing her hands: I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady Macbeth. Yet, here's a spot.

Doctor. Hark! she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy my remembrance the more strongly.

Lady Macbeth. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One, two; why, then 'tis time to do't.—Hell is murky!—Fie, my lord, fie! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

1. report as she said them

2. manner

3. customary

Lady. Such words as I dare not say she uttered them.

Doct. You may say them to me and it is most proper that you should.

Lady. I shall not say either to you or to any one, for there is no one to corroborate my story.

Enter LADY MACBETH *with a lighted candle.*

But look—here she comes. This is her very manner, and indeed she is fast asleep. Note her; come, conceal yourself.

Doct. How did she get the candle?

Lady. Why, it stood beside her bed; she always keeps a light burning by her side. That is her order.

Doct. You see, her eyes are open.

Lady. Yes, but the eyes cannot see.

Doct. What is it she does now? See how she rubs her hands.

Lady. It is a usual thing for her to appear to wash her hands; I have seen her continue to do it for about fifteen minutes.

Lady Mach. Yet there is a spot here.

Doct. Listen, she is speaking. I shall write down what she says in order to be sure of recalling it afterwards.

Lady. Out, damned spot of blood! Out, I say. The clock strikes, one, two—Oh, it is time to do it ....Hell is a dark place...for shame, my husband, for shame! You are a soldier—and still so much afraid!.......Why need we be afraid who knows it, when none dare accuse us? ....Yet who could think that an old man like Duncan had so much blood in him.

Doctor. Do you mark that?

Lady Macbeth. The thane of Fife had a wife: where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o' that, my lord, no more o' that: you mar all with this *starting*.[1]

Doctor. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gentlewoman. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: heaven knows what she has known.

Lady Macbeth. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh, oh, oh!

Doctor. What a sigh is there! The heart is *sorely charged*.[2]

Gentlewoman. I would not have such a heart in my bosom for the dignity *of the whole body*.[3]

Doctor. Well, well, well,—

Gentlewoman. Pray God it be, sir.

Doctor. This disease is beyond my practice: yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep who have died holily in their beds.

Lady Macbeth. Wash your hands, put on your nightgown; look not so pale:—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out on's grave.

Doctor. Even so?

Lady Macbeth. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate: come, come, come, come, give me your hand: what's done cannot be undone: to bed, to bed, to bed. [*Exit.*

1. scene of banquet

2. oppressed with sore weight

3. all the dignity which she as queen enjoys

Doct. Do you hear that ?

Lady Macb. Macduff had a wife ; where is she now ?.. What, will these hands of mine be never clean ? .. Speak no more of that, my lord, no more of that ; you will ruin everything by your nervousness.

Doct You have known that which you should not have known.

Lady. She has spoken that which she ought not to have uttered. God only knows what she has known

Lady Macb. Here in my hand, there is still the smell of blood. All the perfumes of Arabia cannot make this little hand of mine smell sweet. Oh !

Doct. What a heart rending sigh is that ! the heart is heavily laden.

Laay. I would not have such a heart even though royal dignity were to accompany it.

Doct. Well, well,—

Lady. I pray to God that she might be well.

Doct. This disease is beyond my powers, yet I have known persons who walked in their sleep, but died piously and peacefully in their beds.

Lady Macb. (*Imagining that she is addressing Macbeth*). Wash your hands clean ; put on your nightgown ; do not look so pale. I assure you once again. Banquo is buried and cannot come out of his grave ?

Doct. Have things gone so far ?

Lady Macb. Let us go to bed at once. Someone is knocking at the gate of our castle. Come, come, let me hold your hand. What is done cannot be undone—let us go to bed. [*Exit Lady Macbeth*.

Doctor. Will she go now to bed?

Gentlewoman. Directly.

Doctor. Foul *whisperings*[1] are abroad: unnatural deeds
Do breed unnatural troubles: infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets:
More needs she the divine than the physician.
God, God forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the *means of all annoyance*,[2]
And *still*[3] keep eyes upon her: so, good night:
My mind she has *mated*,[4] and amazed my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

Gentlewoman. Good night, good doctor.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* Soldiers.

Menteith. The English *power*[5] is near, led on by Malcolm,
His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:
Revenges burn in them; for their *dear causes*[6]
Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
Excite the mortified man.[7]

Angus. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

Caithness. Who knows if Donalbain be with his brother?

1. rumours
2. all means of injuring herself
3. constantly
4. baffled
5. forces
6. causes that are near their hearts
7. would drive even a dead man to deeds of blood and horror

Doct. Will she now go to bed ?

Lady. Yes, immediately.

Doct. Rumours concerning ugly crimes are in circulation. Monstrous crimes have led to abnormal mental troubles. Guilty minds often give out secrets during sleep. She stands more in need of a priest than a doctor. May God forgive us all. Take proper care of her. Keep every means of self-destruction out of her reach ; and watch her always. So, good night. What I have seen and heard has totally confounded me. I can guess things, but I dare not speak.

Lady. Good night, Doctor. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The country near Dunsinane.*

Enter MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, *and* SOLDIERS.

Ment. The English army is close to us ; it is commanded by Malcolm, his uncle Siward and the brave Macduff. They are inflamed by a desire for revenge ; and their grievances are such as would rouse even the dead to take up arms and fight.

Ang. We shall meet them near Birnam wood, for they are coming that way.

Caith. Is not Donalbain accompanying Malcolm ?

Lennox. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry: there is Siward's son,
And many *unrough*[1] youths that even now
Protest their first of[2] manhood.

Menteith. What does the tyrant?

Caithness. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say he's mad; others, *that lesser hate him*,[3]
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.[4]

Angus. Now does he feel
His secret murders *sticking on*[5] his hands;
Now *minutely*[6] *revolts upbraid his faith-breach*;[7]
Those he commands move only in command,
Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief.

Menteith. Who then shall blame
His *pester'd*[8] senses to recoil and start,
When all that is within him does condemn
Itself for being there?

Caithness. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:
Meet we the *medicine*[9] of the *sickly weal*,[10]
And with him pour we *in our country's purge*[11]
Each drop of us.

1. unbearded
2. show their early manhood
3. that do no hate him so bitterly
4. he cannot maintain authority over his disorganised followers
5. clinging to
6. every minute
7. revolts reproach him for his breach of faith
8. harassed
9. healer
10. *i.e.*, Scotland
11. to purge our country (of tyrants)

Len. No, sir, I know that he is not. I have a list of all the noblemen, who are coming; there is Siward's son, and many beardless young men, who have just reached their manhood.

Ment. What is the tyrant (Macbeth) doing?

Caith. He is fortifying the Dunsinane hill. Some hold that he has gone mad; those who hate him less, say that he is a man of fierce courage. But it is quite certain that he cannot keep under control his party, which is so disunited.

Ang. And the consciousness of his secret murders lies heavy on his mind; now the constant desertion of his own friends is reminding him of his own treason. The people under him obey him out of fear, not out of love. Now he feels his kingship a burden, just as a dwarf feels the dress of a giant.

Ment. It is quite natural that his senses should be troubled now, when his own conscience is rising to condemn him.

Caith. Well, let us march on, and offer our allegiance to him, to whom it is due. Let us meet him who will rid the country of tyranny and let us shed every drop of our blood in trying to deliver our country.

Lennox. Or so much as it needs,
To *dew*[1] the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.
[*Exeunt, marching.*

SCENE III *Dunsinane. A room in the castle.*

Enter MACBETH, DOCTOR, *and* Attendants.

Macbeth Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot *taint*[2] with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All *mortal consequences*[3] have pronounced me thus,
"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with *the English epicures*;[4]
The mind I sway by and the heart I bear
Shall never *sag with*[5] doubt nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant

The devil damn thee black, thou cream faced *loon*![6]
Where gott'st thou that *goose look*?[7]

Serv. There is ten thousand—

Macbeth. Geese, villain?

Servant. Soldiers, sir.

Macbeth. Go, prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou *lily-liver'd*[8] boy. What soldiers, *patch*[9]?

1. *i.e.*, bedew or freshen
2. be infected
3. everything that will happen to mortals
4. the luxurious English people
5. be depressed
6. a worthless fellow
7. a look of stupidity
8. cowardly
9. fool

Len. Or as much blood as may be necessary to help Malcolm and vanquish Macbeth—to destroy the weeds of tyranny and to help the blossoming of true sovereignty. Let us march forward towards Birnam.

SCENE III. *Birnam A room in the castle.* General Question

Enter MACBETH, DOCTOR *and* ATTENDANTS.

Macb. Do not bring to me any more report of desertion; let them all flee away. I need not grow pale with fear, till Birnam wood move to Dunsinane. What is this boy Malcolm? Was he not born of woman? The supernatural beings who know all that concerns mortals have said to me: Do not fear, Macbeth; no man born of woman, can overcome you. Then let false-hearted nobles flee away and mingle with the dainty Enghlishmen. My determined heart shall never shake with fear or doubt.

Enter a SERVANT.

May the devil blacken your face, you white-faced coward? Where did you get that pale white look?

Serv. There are ten thousand—

Macb. Geese, rascal?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

Macb. Go scratch your face to make it look red, you cowardly fellow. What soldiers, fool? May you be damned! These white cheeks of

Death of thy soul! those *linen cheeks*[1] of thine
Are counsellors to fear. What soldiers, *whey-face*?[2]

Servant. The English force, so please you.

Macbeth. Take thy face hence. [*Exit Servant.*
Seyton!—I am sick at heart,
When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This *push*[3]
Will cheer me ever, or *disseat*[4] me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the *sear*,[5] the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, *mouth-honour*,[6] breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.
Seyton!

Enter SEYTON.

Seyton. What is your gracious pleasure?

Macbeth. What news more?

Seyton. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

Macbeth. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be hack'd.
Give me my armour.

Seyton. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macbeth. I'll put it on.
Send out more horses, *skirr*[7] the country round;
Hang those that talk of fear. Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?

1. cheeks white as linen
2. with face as white as whey
3. attack
4. overthrow
5. dry
6. lip-service
7. scour

yours infect others with fear. What soldiers are you talking of, you white-faced fellow?

Serv. The English soldiers, if it please. Your Majesty.

Macb. Take away your white face from my presence.

[*Exit Servant.*

Seyton! I feel sick and despondent, when I see —Seyton, do you hear? This attack will either securely place me on the throne, or rob me of it. I am quite advanced in years, and the blessing, that should come to a man in his old age—honour, affection, obedience, a company of sincere friends,—I cannot hope to possess; instead, I get only curses which, though not open are deep, lip-service and flattery, which the flatterers would like to refuse but dare not. Seyton!

Enter SEYTON.

Sey. What does Your Majesty please to say?

Macb. Have you got any more news?

Sey. All reports have been confirmed.

Macb. I am determined to fight till my body is cut to pieces. Give me my armour.

Sey. There is not yet any need for it.

Macb. I shall put it on. Send out more horsemen; let the surrounding country be searched and let those who talk of fear be hanged. Give me my armour. How is your patient doctor?

Doctor. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with *thick-coming fancies*[1]
That keep her from her rest.

Macbeth. Cure her of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the *written troubles of the brain*,[2]
And with some sweet *oblivious*[3] antidote
Cleanse the *stuff'd*[4] bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

Doctor. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macbeth. Throw *physic*[5] to the dogs, I'll none of it.
Come, put mine armour on; give me my *staff*.[6]
Seyton, send out. Doctor, the thanes fly from me.
Come, sir, dispatch. If thou couldst, doctor, find
My land's disease,
And purge it to a sound and *pristine health*,[7]
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.—Pull't off, I say.—
What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence? Hear'st thou of them?

Doctor. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

1. fancies that throng her mind
2. troubles written indelibly on the brain
3. that causes forgetfulness
4. over burdened
5. remedy
6. here, lance
7. such as she formerly enjoyed

Doct She is not physically ill, my lord ; she is troubled by a crowd of fancies that throng her brain, and that is why she cannot enjoy rest.

Mach It is for you to cure her of that. Have you no medicine to cure mental trouble, to drive out from the mind a deep-rooted sorrow ? Can you not root out the disturbing thoughts that are lodged in the brain, and with some remedy, induce forgetfulness, and relieve the weight of the terrible grief that lies heavy on the heart ?

Doct. That is a trouble which the patient must cure by his own efforts.

Macb. Then throw away your medicines to the dogs. I shall have none of them. [*To Servant*] Come, help me to put on my armour : let me have my staff. Seyton, send out men to search the country. Doctor, the nobles are fleeing away from me (*To the Servant*) Come, fellow, be quick. (*To the doctor*). If you could diagnose the trouble in my country and restore it to this former state of peace, I shall praise your skill, till the praise fills the entire land. (*To the Servant*). Take off the armour. (*To the Doctor*). Could you suggest any purgative drug that would drive away the English from this country. Have you heard of them ?

Doct. Yes, my lord ; the military preparations made by you indicates something.

Macbeth. Bring it after me.
I will not be afraid of death and *bane,*[1]
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.
[*Exeunt all except Doctor.*

Doctor. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Country near Dunsinane: a wood in view.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD *and young* SIWARD, MACDUFF, MENTEITH, CAITHNESS, ANGUS, LENNOX, ROSS, *and* Soldiers, *marching.*

Malcolm. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.[2]

Menteith. We doubt it nothing.

Siward. What wood is this before us?

Menteith. The wood of Birnam.

Malcolm. Let every soldier hew him down a bough
And bear't before him: thereby shall we *shadow*[3]
The numbers of our host and make *discovery*[4]
Err[5] in report of us.

Soldiers. It shall be done.

Siward. We learn no other but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before't.[6]

Malcolm. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given,
Both *more and less*[7] have given him the revolt;

1. destruction
2. when we shall be living quietly in our homes
3. prevent our being seen
4. spies (abstract for concrete)
5. forget
6. allow us to lay seige to it
7. high and low

Macb. (*To the Servant*). Bring the armour after me. I shall not fear death and destruction till Birnam wood reach Dunsinane.

Doct. (*To himself*). If I were at a safe distance from Dunsinane, even the prospect of a handsome fee would not induce me to come here again.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Country near Birnam wood.*

Enter MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD *and others.*

Mal. Cousins, I hope the time is not far off when men will live in peace in their houses.

Ment. There is no doubt about it.

Siw. What is the wood in front of us ?

Ment. It is the wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every man cut a branch from a tree and carry it before him. We shall thus be able to hide our strength, and make the scouts give wrong report about us.

Soldiers. We shall do so.

Siw. We have got no other report than that the tyrant confident of his strength, shuts himself up in Dunsinane, and will allow us to attack the castle.

Mal. It is his main hope ; for whenever there was opportunity for desertion, persons, both high

And none serve with him but *constrained things*,[1]
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macduff. Let our just censures
Attend the true event,[2] and put we on
Industrious soldiership.[3]

Siward. The time approaches
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have, and what we owe.
Thoughts *speculative*[4] their unsure hopes relate,
But *certain issue strokes must arbitrate*[5]:
Towards which advance the war. [*Exeunt. marching.*

SCENE V. *Dunsinane. Within the castle.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MACBETH, SEYTON, *and* Soldiers.

Macbeth. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still "They come": our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie
Till famine and the ague eat them up:
Were they not *forced*[6] with those that should be ours,
We might have met them *dareful*,[7] beard to beard,
And beat them backward home.

[*A cry of women within.*

What is that noise?

1. men who have been forced into service
2. let us await the actual event to show how far our opinions were just
3. make proper military preparations
4. conjectures
5. actual result can be decided only by blows
6. reinforced; strengthened
7. full of daring

and low, have deserted him, and those that are in his service serve him under compulsion, not willingly.

Macd. Let us reserve our judgment till the issue of the fight, when we shall know the true facts. Meanwhile let us be careful in our preparations.

Siw. The time is not far off when the result of the fight will show what we have and what we have not. Mere surmise may produce elusive hopes; but the final issue will be decided by actual fighting. And let our army march forward to achieve that end.

SCENE V. *Dunsinane.*

Enter MACBETH, SEYTON *and* Soldiers.

Macb. Hoist our flags on the outer walls of the castle. Every report, that comes to me, informs me of their advance. Our castle is strong enough to resist the siege of the enemy. Here let the enemy lie till starvation and fever destroy them. Were they not assisted by those that should have been on our side, we might have met them boldly face to face and routed them completely.

[*A cry of women.*

What is that noise?

Seyton. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*

Macbeth. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have *cool'd*[1]
To hear a night-shriek; and my *fell of hair*[2]
Would at a *dismal treatise*[3] rouse and stir
As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once *start*[4] me.

Re-enter SEYTON.

Wherefore was that cry?

Seyton. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macbeth. She should have died *hereafter*;[5]
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,[6]
Creeps *in this petty pace*[7] from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger.

Thou comest to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

1. quailed or recoiled
2. scalp of the head
3. fearful story
4. startle
5. later
6. each succeeding day
7. one weary day following another

Sey. It is the cry of women, my good lord. [*Exit.*

Macb. I have almost forgot what fear is. There was a time when my heart would be chilled by a cry at night, and my hair would stand on end, as if it were alive, at some horrible story. I have had too much of horrible things. I am now so familiar with horrors and murders that nothing can startle me now.

Re-enter SEYTON.

What was that cry about?

Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died some time after; there would have been some other suitable time in the future for this piece of news. Each day follows another till we reach the last moment of earthly time, and every day that passes leads the foolish men along the way to death, when they would be finally consigned to dust. Let the flame of life be extinguished, I don't care, for life is no more than a moving shadow—a poor actor, who brags and walks pompously on the stage for a short while, and then is not heard any more. Life is no better than a tale told by a fool, full of loud noise but devoid of any sense.

Enter a Messenger.

You have something to say—well, tell your news quickly.

Messenger. Gracious my lord,
I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

Macbeth. Well, say, sir.

Messenger. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and *anon*,[1] *methought*,[2]
The wood began to move.

Macbeth. Liar and slave!

Messenger. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

Macbeth. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling thee.[3] If thy speech be *sooth*,[4]
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the *equivocation*[5] of the fiend,
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane"; and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!
If this which he *avouches*[6] does appear,
There is nor flying hence nor tarrying here.
I *gin*[7] to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the *estate*[8] o' the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, *wrack*![9]
At least we'll die with *harness*[10] on our back.
[*Exeunt.*

1. soon
2. it seemed time
3. till you die of starvation
4. true
5. ambiguous utterances
6. declares
7. begin
8. the whole order
9. wreck, ruin
10. armour

Mess. My good lord, I should say what I saw, but I do not know how to describe what I saw.

Mac. Well, say it.

Mess. As I was standing on guard on the hill, I looked towards Birnam, and it soon appeared to me as though the wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and scoundrel!

Mess. Let me suffer any punishment, that you may inflict upon me in your anger, if it is not true. It is only three miles and you may see it moving—I say, it is a moving wood.

Macb. If you tell a lie, you will be hanged on the nearest tree till starvation destroys you. If it is true, I do not care if you do the same to me. I am losing my confidence, and I begin to doubt the ambiguous utterances of the witches that has all the appearance of truth: do not fear till Birnam wood moves towards Dunsinane; and now a wood is actually moving towards Dunsinane and now let us arm ourselves and meet the foe. If his report is true, there is no use either fleeing away or remaining here. I begin to be sick of life. And I wish the world had come to an end Ring the alarm-bell. Let the wind blow its hardest, let destruction overtake the world—I shall yet die fighting like a soldier. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane. Before the castle.*

Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, *&c., and their* Army, *with boughs.*

Mal. Now near enough ; your *leavy*[1] screens throw down,
And show like those you are. You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right-noble son,
Lead our first *battle*[2] : worthy Macduff and we
Shall take upon's what else remains to do,
According to our *order.*[3]

Siward. Fare you well.
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macduff. Make all our trumpets speak ; give them all breath,
Those clamorous *harbingers*[4] of blood and death. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field.*

Alarums. Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. They have tied me to a *stake* ;[5] I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course. What's he
That was not born of woman ? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name ?

Macbeth. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No ; though thou call'st thyself a hotter name
Than any is in hell.

1. leafy

2. battalion

3. *i.e.*, order of the battle

4. fore-runner

5. as a bear was tied to a stake in bear-baiting

SCENE VI. *Dunsinane.*

Enter MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, MACDUFF, *etc.*

Mal. Now, we have come near enough to Dunsinane. Throw away the branches that have hidden you from the enemy. You brave uncle shall lead the van of the army with your valiant son, my cousin. Noble Macduff and myself will do what remains to be done according to our plan of operations.

Siw. Farewell. If we meet Macbeth's army to-night we must face him, or else we deserve to be beaten.

Macd. Let all trumpets be blown ; let all the instruments that proclaim death and destruction be sounded. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Another part of the field.*

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. They have driven me to bay : I cannot escape, but like a bear chained to a pole, must fight the dogs here. Where is the man who was not born of woman ? I fear only such a man—and no one else.

Enter Young SIWARD.

Yo. Siw. What is your name ?

Macb. You will be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No ; though your name were more horrible than that of any devil in hell.

Macbeth. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce a title
More hateful to mine ear.

Macbeth. No, nor more fearful.

Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my sword
I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*

Macbeth. Thou wast born of woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

[*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. That way the noise is. Tyrant, show thy face!
If thou be'st slain and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched *kerns*,[1] whose arms
Are hired to bear their *staves*:[2] either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems *bruited*:[3] let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarums.*

Enter MALCOLM *and old* SIWARD.

Siward. This way, my lord; the castle's gently render'd:
The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;

1. infantry
2. lances
3. announced

Macb. I am called Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. Satan himself could not utter a name more hateful to me.

Macb. Nor one more fearful.

Yo. Siw. You lie, you hateful tyrant; with my sword I shall prove that you are lying.

[*They fight and Young Siward is killed.*]

Macb. You were born of woman. I laugh at swords that are wielded by a man born of woman.

[*Exit.*

Enter MACDUFF.

Macb. The noise of fighting was coming from this direction. Tyrant, show your face. If you are slain by anybody other than myself, my wife's and children's ghosts will cry for vengeance and constantly vex me. I hate to fight with hired mercenaries; either I kill you, Macbeth, with this sword of mine, or I sheathe my sword without using it at all in the fight. Macbeth must be in that direction—the noise there proclaims a man of the highest position. May I have the good fortune to find him! I do not beg any more favour in the hands of fate.

[*Exit.*

Enter MALCOLM *and old* SIWARD.

Siw. Come this way, my lord. The castle has surrendered without offering any opposition.

The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Malcolm. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.[1]

Siward. Enter, sir, the castle.
[*Exeunt. Alarums.*

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field.*

Enter MACBETH.

Macbeth. Why should I *play the Roman fool*,[2] and die
On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Enter MACDUFF.

Macduff. Turn, hell-hound, turn!

Macbeth. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much *charged*[3]
With blood of thine already.

Macduff. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out![4] [*They fight.*

Macbeth. Thou losest labour:
As easy mayst thou the *interchant*[5] air
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on *vulnerable crests*;[6]
I bear a *charmed life*[7] which must not yield
To one of woman born.

1. that fight on our side

2. act foolishly like Romans

3. loaded

4. than words can describe

5. that which cannot be cut through

6. heads that are liable to injury

7. life guarded by a charm or magic

Macbeth's soldiers are fighting on both sides. The nobles are fighting bravely. Victory is practically yours and little remains to be done.

Mal. We have men, who were first fighting for the enemy but who are now on our side.

Siw. Now take possession of the castle, sir.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. *Another part of the field.*

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. Why should I act like a Roman fool and commit suicide ? As long as I see the foe around me, I would prefer to inflict wounds on them rather than on my own body.

Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. Turn towards me, you hell-dog.

Macb. Of all men I have avoided you. But go back ; already the guilt of killing your family lies heavily on my soul.

Macd I cannot speak. My sword will speak for me. You murderous devil, more hateful than words can describe you.

Macb. You are wasting your energy It is as easy for you to cut the invulnerable air as inflict any wound on me. You had rather find persons who are vulnerable. My life is protected by a charm —it will not fall by the hands of a man born of woman.

Macduff. *Despair thy charm*;[1]
And let the angel whom thou still hast served
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macbeth. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath *cow'd*[2] my better part of man!
And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That *palter*[3] with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope! I'll not fight with thee.

Macduff. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the *show and gaze*[4] o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here may you see the tyrant."

Macbeth. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be *baited with the rabble's curse.*[5]
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born,
Yet I will *try the last.*[6] Before my body
I throw my warlike shield: lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries "Hold, enough!"

[*Exeunt, fighting. Alarums.*

1. be despaired of thy charm
2. intimidate
3. play
4. a show and exhibition
5. chafed
6. make the last effort

Macd. Do not put any faith in that charm. And let the demon, whom you have served so long, tell you that I was torn out of my mother's womb before the proper time.

Macb. Let the man who tells me this be cursed, for it has scared all courage out of me And let those equivocating witches, who cheat us with predictions, be no more believed by man; their ambiguous predictions apparently seem to be true but turn out to be false. I shall not fight with you.

Macd. Then surrender, you coward; if you live, you will live like a human monster, who will be exhibited to men. We shall have your likeness painted on a piece of cloth and then hang it from a pole and write under it: "Here you may see the tyrant".

Macb. I shall not yield to lie prostrate at the feet of that boy Malcolm and to be greeted with curses by the mob. Though Birnam has come to Dunsinane and though you who are not born of woman, are my adversary, I shall fight to the last. I hold my strong shield before my body as a protection. Strike, Macduff, as hard as you can, and let him be damned who first exclaims, "Stop".

[*Exeunt fighting.*

Retreat. Flourish. Enter, with drum and colours, MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, ROSS, LENNOX, ANGUS, CAITHNESS, MENTEITH *and* Soldiers.

Malcolm. I would the friends we miss were safe arrived.
Siward. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.
Malcolm. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.
Ross. Your son, my lord, *has paid a soldier's debt*:[1]
He only lived but till he was a man;
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.
Siward. Then he is dead?
Ross. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward. Had he his hurts before?
Ross. Ay, on the front.
Siward. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so, his *knell is knoll'd.*[2]
Malcolm. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

1. died like a soldier

2. his death-knell has been tolled (there is no need to give way to further lamentation)

Re-enter MALCOLM, *old* SIWARD, ROSS *and others.*

Mal. I wish the friend whom we don't see here, had come back safely.

Siw. Some are bound to die ; and yet, judging by the persons alive, I must say that our victory has been achieved cheaply enough.

Mal. Macduff and your noble son are not here.

Ross. Your son, my lord, has died fighting like a soldier. He just arrived at manhood. As soon as he proved his manhood by the fearless manner in which he held fast to his post in the battlefield, he fell fighting like a true hero.

Siw. Then he is dead ?

Ross. Yes, and his body has been carried away from the battlefield. Your sorrow should not be measured by the merits he possessed, for then your sorrow would be measureless.

Siw. Had he his wounds in the front part of his body ?

Ross. Yes, on the front part.

Siw. Why, then, may God take him under his care. If I had as many sons as I have hair, I would not wish them to die a nobler death. And so that is all I need to say in lamenting his death.

Mal. He deserves a deeper mourning, and that I shall do that for him.

Siward. He's worth no more:
They say he *parted well.*[1] and *paid his score*:[2]
And so, God be with him! Here comes newer comfort.

Re-enter MACDUFF, *with* MACBETH's *head.*

Macd. Hail, king! for so thou art: behold, where stands,
The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy *kingdom's pearl,*[3]
That speak my *salutation*[4] in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine:
Hail, King of Scotland!

All. Hail, King of Scotland! [*Flourish.*

Malcolm. We shall not spend a large expense of time
Before we reckon with your several loves,
And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
In such an honour named. What's more *to do,*[5]
Which would be planted newly with the time,—
As calling home our exiled friends abroad,
That fled the snares of *watchful tyranny*;[6]
Producing forth the cruel ministers
Of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen,
Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
Took off her life; this, and what needful else
That calls upon us, by the *grace of Grace,*[7]
We will perform *in measure,*[8] time and place:
So, thanks to all at once and to each one,
Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.
[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

1. died nobly
2. played his part well
3. the best men in the kingdom
4. congratulation
5. to be done
6. tyrant who constantly employed spies
7. grace of God
8. in proper degree

Siw. He needs no more mourning. I am told that he died nobly and that he paid his debt to life in an honourable manner—and so may God take him under his care. Here comes something that is more consoling.

Re-enter MACDUFF *with* MACBETH'S *head.*

Macd. Hail, King of Scotland, for you are now king. See here I have got the head of the usurper. The country is now free. I see you surrounded by the flower of the country's nobility, who greet you as king silently in their hearts, and whom I now call upon to join me in acclaiming you as king.

All. Hail, King of Scotland.

Mal. We shall not take long to find out how deeply I am indebted to each one of you and then to repay that debt. Nobles and kinsmen, from this day you will be earls, the first batch to be honoured with this title in Scotland. There are some other things that we have to do, to mark the beginning of the new regime—*viz.*, calling back our friends who had left home in order to escape from the clutches of the tyrant who employed spies to watch them ; hunting out and punishing the agents of this dead murderer and his devilish queen, who, it is supposed, committed suicide. All these and other necessary things that demand attention, we shall, by the grace of God, perform in due measure, and at due time and place. So I thank you all and each one of you, and invite you to come and see our coronation at Scone.

[*Exeunt.*

...ster. He needs no more mourning. ... They tell me he died nobly and that he paid his debt to life in a fashion worthy of a soldier — and so may God take him to his care. Here comes something that is more [illegible].

... *Reënter* Macduff, *with* Macbeth's *head.*

Macd. Hail, King of Scotland! for you are now King. See where I have got the head of this usurper. The country is free now. I see you surrounded by the flower of the country's nobility, who repeat in their own hearts, as I do in mine, the greeting which I have spoken aloud. Now join me in proclaiming you aloud, Hail, King of Scotland!

Mal. We shall not take long to find out how much we are indebted to each one of you, and then [illegible]. Nobles and kinsmen, from this time on you are to be earls, the first bearing the honoured title in Scotland. There are some other things we have to do, which must be the business of the new reign, — as, calling back our friends who [illegible] themselves or ran away to escape from the tyranny [illegible] ... [illegible] and bringing to justice the brutal agents of this dead butcher and his fiend-like queen, who, it is supposed, [illegible] ... suicide. All these and other necessary [illegible] ... we shall, by the grace [illegible] ... [illegible]

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

ACT I

SCENE I.

Analysis of the Scene.

The scene opens with a conversation between three witches who have assembled in a wild solitary place amid thunder and lightning. They evince a certain amount of interest in Macbeth, a Scottish General, who is engaged in a great battle with the invaders, and predict that the battle will end before sunset. They disperse with a plan to meet Macbeth in the deserted heath while he returns triumphant from the field of battle.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

Unlike the other plays of Shakespeare, in *Macbeth* the play does not open with an exposition of the plot. In the opening scenes, very often in Shakespeare, the plots are revealed to us through a conversation between two or more of minor characters. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare adopts a new mode ; the play opens quite abruptly with a conversation among three witches and their evident interest in the affairs of Macbeth.

The witches in the first scene of *Macbeth* are brought into close connection with the play. *Macbeth* is more a play of atmosphere than one of character, and the witches in the opening scene serve to envelop the play in an atmosphere of gloom and desolation. Thus they provide that gloomy and shadowy setting which is so necessary to a tragedy of the type of *Macbeth*. Through the introduction of the witches great interest is excited in the minds of the audience in the hero Macbeth. We are sufficiently prepared for the distorted workings of the human mind in the later scenes, for the preternatural happenings, and the conflict of the human soul with the forces that are pitted against from the outside.

The scene is deliberately made short by Shakespeare. A longer scene would spoil the effect. It is just sufficient to suggest the predominance of the supernatural forces over the human ones. We are made to witness the concluding part of the witches' conference, and just the faintest of hints is thrown to us that these supernatural influences are going to cast their baneful powers over the human characters in the play. As Coleridge remarks: "The poet's object was to raise the mind at once to the high tragic tone, that the audience might be ready for the precipitate consummation of guilt in the early part of the play." The gloomy forbidding background, the thunder and lightning, the presence of the witches and their predictions and plans, all suggest to us the tragic nature of the subject, and produce in us the sense of an impending evil, an overhanging doom.

Notes and Explanations

4. *Hurlyburly*—Here refers to the clamour and confusion of battle. The sound of the word echoes with the sense. The word is specially compounded to denote the tumult of the battle.

5. *The battle's lost and won*—When the battle ends with defeat on one side and victory on the other. The reference is to the battle against Macdonwald and Sweno.

6. *Ere*—before.

Upon the heath—a heath is a flat waste tract of land covered with thin stiff vegetation. It is a common Scottish landscape.

7. *There . . . . Macbeth*—Macbeth's name is quite naturally introduced by the witches. The question is often raised as to why Macbeth is singled out for the evil influences of the witches. It is quite possible that there is in Macbeth an underlying current of evil, a predisposition to commit crime. *Graymalkin*—is a familiar name for a grey cat. Each witch has her attendant demon which has the power to transform itself into any shape it likes. According to popular tradition and the Elizabethan idea of witchcraft, cats were usually associated with witches. The First Witch hears her attendant spirit calling to her.

9. *Paddock*—a toad or frog. The name is still common in Scotland. The familiar spirit of the Second Witch is a frog which is now calling her to come. The word means a 'little toad.'

10. *Anon*—in an instant; instantly; immediately; in a moment. A very common word with waiters at taverns. 'Anon, anon sir' is an inn-waiter's usual reply when summoned by guests.

11. *What is fair to others is foul for us; and what is foul for them, fair*—what men dislike and hate we cherish; what they delight in, we detest. This enigmatic utterance is quite typical of the witches. For them there is no distinction between good and bad, fair and foul. The witches are always associated with crimes and other misdeeds.

It is interesting to note that the words 'fair is foul,' etc., of the witches are an exact replica, as it were, of what Macbeth himself says on his very first entrance on the stage. Thus the witches are anticipating Macbeth and we are here subtly told by Shakespeare that the relation between Macbeth and the witches is intimate and real. It also proves, of course, that Macbeth has in him already an under-current of evil which he ultimately is engulfed in as the play develops.

12. *Hover*—fly about. *Filthy air*—in the unwholesome atmosphere; the atmosphere is made thick and dark through mist.

SCENE II

Analysis of the Scene.

The scene takes place on the same day immediately after the meeting of the witches. It is laid in a camp near Forres. Duncan is there with his two sons Malcolm and Donalbain, and his attendants. A bleeding sergeant, who has just arrived from the field of battle, reports how the fortune of the battle seemed to waver at first when Macbeth came to the scene and, with a brilliant display of martial valour, killed the rebel Macdonwald, and led the king's forces to victory. The king of Norway at this juncture, essaying an opportunity, joined the attack with fresh supplies of men. The sergeant, faint with bleeding, is

unable to finish the report, and the story of Macbeth's struggle with the king of Norway is given by Ross. He tells how the victory fell on Macbeth and Banquo, the captains of the king, despite the help the king of Norway received from the treacherous thane of Cawdor. The scene ends with the pronouncement of death on the thane of Cawdor, and the conferring of his title on Macbeth.

Critical Comments on the scene.

The story interest of the play begins with this scene and it is in the nature of an exposition, the author giving such information as is necessary to the audience about the events in the play. The dramatist reveals to us the condition of Scotland, the civil wars that divide the country and Macbeth's part in quelling the rebellion. Throughout the scene Shakespeare lays special emphasis on the undaunted courage of Macbeth, so that our interest is raised and sustained in the hero. The dramatist also takes special pains to sketch the character of Duncan in a favourable light, so that in the later scenes the crime of Macbeth may look all the more horrid. In this Shakespeare deviates from his original, Holinshed, who represents Duncan as a weak king, very slack in punishing offenders. Shakespeare also deviates from Holinshed when he merges three separate incidents, the revolt of Macdonwald, the invasion of Sweno, and the attack of Canute, into one for the sake of dramatic brevity.

This scene has been suspected as un-Shakespearian. The narrative of the battle by the sergeant is given in a highly elevated diction, the metre is extremely slovenly, and the style bombastic. But this epic style is highly suitable for describing an action taking place off the stage. The rugged and bombastic diction is quite in tune with the breathless hurry of the sergeant who is faint after a long day of strenuous fight. There cannot be any absurdity in making the bleeding sergeant messenger ; it certainly would make the scene picturesque, and add to the atmosphere of the play. This scene is highly necessary from an artistic point of view and cannot be spurious as some editors suggest.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Bloody*—bleeding from wounds. It is a fitting des-

cription of the main events of the play. Often and again we get visions of blood on the stage. The actual battle takes place off the stage, but the picture of the bleeding sergeant and his excited but realistic description of the events would bring the whole scene in the mind of the audience.

2. *As seemeth* - as it seems or appears. *By his plight*—from his condition ; from the fact that he is grievously wounded. *Revolt*—i.e. of Macdonwald, a Highland chieftain. *The newest state*—the latest condition.

3. *Sergeant*—not the petty non-commissioned officer of the present day, but a subordinate who is bound under the feudal system to render military service to his lord in times of internal agitation.

4. *Good*—loyal. *Hardy*—valiant ; brave.

5. *'Gainst my captivity*—saved me from being taken a prisoner. The reference must be to some previous engagement in which the sergeant had saved the life of Malcolm. Notice how Malcolm is made to quit the battlefield before the fight is over. Probably it is done by Shakespeare to enhance the glory of Macbeth. There is a chance of Macbeth being overshadowed if Malcolm is present in the field and takes part in the conflict.

6. *The knowledge*—your knowledge ; everything you know. *Broil*—battle. The word has lost its strong sense ; now it means a petty disturbance. Note Holinshed's use of the word 'nickering' in the same sense.

7. *Doubtful*—undecided. The fortunes of the battle seemed undecided.

8. *Spent*—faint ; weary ; exhausted. *Cling together*—hold fast to each other ; clasp each other with their arms.

9. *Choke their art*—make ineffective their skill ; render useless their powers of swimming.

The two armies had a close fight. The struggle was at close quarters, and the exhausted troops grappled with one another like two weary swimmers who lock themselves up in each other's arms in a deadly embrace, each trying to render useless the skill of the other. In their fierce efforts to put down the skill of their opponents they themselves ran the

risk of being annihilated, as the swimmers ran the risk of being drowned.

9. *Merciless*—ruthless.

10. One who is in every way fitted to be a rebel because of his evil nature. *To that*—to that end ; so that he might be a rebel.

11. *Multiplying villainies of nature*—two interpretations are possible. *Multiplying*—numerous.

(*a*) Nature has implanted in him innumerable vices.

(*b*) Vices in his nature are continually on the increase, ever multiplying.

12. *Swarm*—crowd ; move in a large number together. *Western Isles*—the Western Isles of Scotland. According to Holinshed, 'a great multitude of people' from the Western Isles helped Macdonwald. Kerns and Gallowglasses came from Ireland. This confusion is perhaps due to the hasty reading of Holinshed. It is also quite possible that Shakespeare meant to compress these details as he did the events.

13. *Kerns*—light armed infantry from Ireland, mostly drawn from poorer classes. The 'kerns' represent the third class of retainers under the Irish nobles. The word is obsolete in current English. *Gallowglasses*—Heavy-armed Irish soldiers. They were armed with sharp axes. *Supplied*—provided with.

14. *Fortune*—the goddess of fortune. *Damned quarrel smiling*—fortune seemed to favour his accursed cause. The Folio reads 'quarry' meaning prey, instead of quarrel. If we accept the Folio reading the meaning would be, Mistress Fortune smiled on the doomed prey, i.e., the rebel army doomed to fall before Macbeth. *Smiling*—looking upon with favour.

15. *Show'd like a rebel's whore*—revealed herself as the mistress of the rebel by supporting his cause. Pretended to be the mistress of the rebel. The goddess Fortune is compared to a harlot, now smiling on one person and then on another. *But . . . weak*—all the reinforcements were of no avail.

16. *Name*—title.

17. *Disdaining fortune*—holding in contempt the awards of fortune. *Brandished steel*—waving or flourishing his sword.

18. *Smoked . . . execution*—the sword steamed as it were because of the bloodshed by Macbeth in the battle. *Bloody execution*—slaughter attended with bloodshed.

19. *Valour's minion*—the favourite or darling son of valour. *Carved out his passage*—cut a passage or way for himself. He had to strike right and left to make his approach to the rebel.

20. *He*—Macbeth. *Slave*—wretch, the rebel Macdonwald.

21. *Which . . . him*—he never shook hands or bade farewell to Macdonwald till he had ripped him up from the nave to the jaws and fixed his head upon the battlements. The passage here seems to be corrupt. The antecedent here strictly ought to be Macdonwald. *Shook hands*—reference to the custom of shaking hands and bidding farewell to each other before a single combat.

22. *Unseam'd him*—ripped open. *Nave*—navel. *Chaps*—jaws ; cheeks ; cf. Middleton, The Witch : 'I'll rip thee down from neck to navel.'

23. *Fixed*—planted; placed. *Battlements*—Indented parapet ; a parapet with a series of notches generally used in fortifications for defence.

24. *Cousin*—Duncan and Macbeth were both grandsons of King Malcolm, the former by his daughter Beatrice married to Crinan, Thane of the Isles and Western parts of Scotland, and the latter by his daughter Doada and her husband Sinel, thane of Glamis. This relationship is according to Holinshed.

25. *As whence*—the quarter from which. *'gins*—begins. *Reflection*—return, reappearance.

26. *Shipwrecking storms*—storms which cause shipwreck. *Direful*—dreadful ; terrible. *Break*—break forth.

27. *Spring*—source ; fountain. *Comfort*—hope of victory.

28. *Discomfort*—disaster ; danger ; calamity. *Swells*—rises up. The metaphor is water welling up into a flood.

25—28. (1) The sergeant gives an account of the appearance of fresh dangers. As terrible storms sometimes appear in the east, the direction from which the sun every day makes his welcome appearance, so also trouble appeared just at the moment when Macbeth's victory seemed certain after the slaying of Macdonwald. Danger overtook him all of a sudden from the most unexpected quarter. The death of Macdonwald instead of ending the conflict only brought forth fresh dangers. *His reflection*—reappearance of the sun every morning.

(2) There might be a reference to equinotical gales, to the terrible storms that sometimes blow in the spring when the sun shines with greater warmth. If we accept this interpretation '*whence*' would mean—from the time when—and '*reflection*'—the return movement of the sun from North to South at the vernal equinox. Thus in the spring season when we would expect only bright sunshine and warmth, there sometimes arise dreadful storms. In the same way trouble brewed up at a time when the soldiers least expected it ; the expected comfort was only the starting point of a new disaster.

29. *No sooner . . . arm'd*—Macbeth's forces were fighting for a just cause ; they were also helped by their natural bravery. Their inborn courage was an additional weapon with which they were armed. *Justic*—people who have justice on their side ; champions of justice.

30. *Skipping*—light-footed ; there is also a suggestion of their cowardice. It is a fitting term for a light-armed infantry. They can be swift-footed because they are not heavily armed. *To trust to their heels*—to put faith in their heels, i.e., seek safety by running away from the field of battle.

31. *Norwevan lord*—the King of Norway, Sweno. According to Holinshed, he was King of Denmark and Norway, and father of Harold, Sweno, and Canute. After defeating Ethelred and snatching away his kingdom, he placed his son Harold on the throne. *Surveying vantage*—seeing an opportunity for which he had been waiting ; seeking an opening.

32. *Furbished*—burnished ; shining ; unstained by use.

New supplies of men—there is some confusion here because Shakespeare has attempted condensation of three different accounts given by Holinshed into one.

33. *Fresh assault*—a second attack. *Dismayed*—annoyed ; vexed ; discouraged.

34. *Captains*—generals ; commanders. 'Yes' here is said in irony.

35. *As sparrows......lion*—as sparrows frighten eagles, or hares the lion.

36. *Say*—am to say. *Sooth*—truth. *They*—Macbeth and Banquo.

37. *As cannons . . . cracks*—they were like cannons loaded up with a double charge of gunpowder. If the cannons are overchaged, they will give a louder report. Macbeth and Banquo fought with such fierce energy dealing destruction all around that they seemed to be like cannon loaded up with double the quantity of gunpowder required, thereby giving a louder boom, and being a more effective instrument of destruction. (2) *Crack*—here strictly denotes the sound other than of the explosion and not the explosive itself. The effect is used for the cause. (3) The reference to the cannon is a piece of anachronism. Cannon was introduced for the first time in England only in the sixteenth century and hence it could not have been used as an instrument of war in the eleventh century.

39. *Except*—unless. *Reeking wounds*—hot blood flowing out of wounds.

40. *Memorise*—make the place memorable. *Golgatha*—a burial-place of skulls. The sergeant suggests that perhaps the captains wanted to bathe themselves in the blood of their foes or make the place as memorable as Golgatha. (2) Another meaning is suggested for Golgatha. Some find in it an allusion to the place where Christ was crucified. He was crucified just outside the walls of Jerusalem.

42. *Faint*—weak. *Gashes cry for help*—my gaping wounds clamour to be attended to. They need immediate attention.

43. *So will thy . . . wounds*—both your words and wounds do credit to you. Your words fit your brave nature

as well as your wounds. *Become thee*—fit you ; give credit to you. Your wounds show that you are a brave soldier and your warm appreciation of the noble virtues of others shows your own nobility of character.

44. *Smack*—taste ; indicate. Both your wounds and words indicate your honourable nature.

45. *Thane*—an old Scottish title. A nobleman of almost the same rank as an Earl.

46. *What . . . eyes*—His looks show that he is in a great hurry. *Should he*—would one.

47. *That . . . strange*—one who seems about to strange happenings. One can read the unusual nature of his tidings from his face.

48. *Worthy thane*—noble lord. *Fife*—a country north of the Firth of Forth.

49. *Norweyan banners*—the ensigns of the King of Norway.

50. *Flout the sky*—'to flout' means 'to mock.' Here flap defiantly in the wind. Ross, like the sergeant, describes the previous advantages of the rebels in the present tense, in the strongest light of achievement. The Norwegian banners flout or insult the sky, whilst raised in the pride of expected victory. They are a bold display of lawless ensigns in the face of heaven. (*Elwin.*) (2) Malone gives another interpretation. 'The Norwegian standards, being captured by Duncan's army, were fixed in the ground ; and idly flapping about served only to fan the conqueror cool.'

51. *Terrible*—terror-inspiring ; terrifying.

52. *Assisted*—not personal assistance. but by sending reinforcement. (See Introduction, Textual.) *Disloyal traitor*—the thane of Cawdor is condemned because of his treachery towards the king.

53. *Dismal*—ill-boding ; terrible ; dreadful.

54. *Till that*—till. *Bellona's bridegroom*—Bellona was the Roman goddess of war. By referring to him as the bridegroom of Bellona, Macbeth is made the god of war. Throughout this scene Shakespeare emphasises upon the personal bravery of Macbeth. He is 'valour's minion,' and

Bellona's bridegroom. *Lapp'd in proof*—clad in armour, proof against all blows.

55. *Confront*—face ; encounter. *Self comparison*—comparison between their two selves.

56. *Point . . . rebellious*—each hostile sword crossing the other.

57. *Curbing . . . spirit*—checking his insolent nature. *Lavish*—unrestrained. *Conclude*—to bring the narrative to conclusion ; to conclude the story. Macbeth encountered the King of Norway, matched himself against him, set his sword against the rebels, and checked his insolent spirit.

58. *Great happiness*—it is a great happiness. Duncan is delighted to hear such happy news.

59. *That*—so that.

60. *Craves composition*—begs terms of peace.

61. *Deign*—allow ; permit. We will not permit him to bury his dead.

62. *Disbursed*—paid. *Saint Colme's Inch*—Inch-colm, off the coast of Fife. St. Columba's island. It is a small island on the Firth of Forth where could be found the ruins of an abbey dedicated to St. Columba, an Irish prince.

63. *Dollar*—the mention of dollars by Ross is an anachronism. The dollar was first coined in 1510 in the valley of St. Joachim in Bohemia. *General use*—for the use of all of us. To be spent in a way we like.

64. *Deceive*—betray.

65. *Bosom interest*—the interests close to my heart ; my affection and friendship for him. *Present*—immediate.

SCENE III

Analysis of the Scene.

In this scene we once more find ourselves in the company of the witches and learn more about them. The witches meet in the wild heath and await the arrival of Macbeth. Before the arrival of the two captains, they relate what they had been doing since their first meeting. The First Witch had seen a sailor's wife munching chestnuts, and she had refused to give her some when she asked for them. She

is furious against this woman and needs must have her revenge on her. Her husband is a sailor and master of the ship, 'The Tiger.' He has gone to Aleppo ; the witch will follow him thither in a sieve, in the shape of a rat without a tail, will gnaw a hole in the ship, make him spend sleepless nights and afflict him both bodily and mentally. The other witches offer to help her by raising a rough wind ; she, however, has every wind necessary for the purpose and, therefore, curtly refuses. They then join their hands together and dance in ringlets till they hear the sound of a drum announcing the approach of Macbeth.

Banquo first sees these unearthly bearded hags, with choppy hands and skinny lips, and is amazed. The First Witch on seeing them addresses Macbeth as the thane of Glamis, the second as the thane of Cawdor, the third greets him with the title of king, which he shall later become. Banquo sees his friend start without any cause at such a fair prediction and is surprised ; he asks the witches to tell what the future holds for him. At this the witches tell him that although he may not be a king himself, his issues will occupy the throne of Scotland. Macbeth is violently excited. He wants to know more, but the witches vanish and merge in the thin air.

Now Ross and Angus appear on the scene and hail Macbeth with the title 'thane of Cawdor,' thus fulfilling partially the prophetic utterances of the witches. The old thane of Cawdor has betrayed the king's trust and is under the sentence of death. The king has commissioned Ross to greet Macbeth with this new title. Macbeth is very much impressed by the unusual happenings and lapses into 'strange imaginings,' forgetting even to thank the nobleman who had brought him such welcome news, till he is roused from his musing by Bauquo. Macbeth thanks the lords and all of them repair to the court to meet the king.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

In the third scene we renew our acquaintance with the witches, and learn more about the malignity of their nature. Banquo gives us a description of their physical appearance and incidentally in the course of their talk we are able to

understand something about their usual pursuits. Although in appearance they are in accordance with the witches of Elizabethan superstition, in the presence of Macbeth, they are more like the weird sisters, inciting him to evil. Ross sums up the powers of the witches : 'These witches or weird sisters are the embodiment, in visible form, of the malignant influences of nature, which are ever on the alert to establish an unholy alliance with the criminal instincts of the human heart. Theirs is an independent vitality of evil, whirling through the universe till it finds asylum in a soul where germs of sin lie ready to be quickened into life.' The fact that Macbeth starts at the prophecy proves positively the predisposition in him to evil, which is a part of his nature ; the prediction of the witches is not in any way foreign to his thoughts.

The characters of Macbeth and Banquo are contrasted in this scene. Both of them are victorious generals, both meet the witches under the same conditions, the nature of the prophetic utterances in their essence is the very same. But the effects produced are different. Macbeth is running into a trap with his eyes wide open ; good and bad elements have been placed before him and he deliberately chooses the evil. The character of Banquo is a refreshing contrast : to him the prediction is something curious, but never more important than that.

It is to be particularly noticed that by the contrasting reactions of Macbeth and of Banquo to the prophecy of the witches, we are made to know that the supernatural element in the play is intimately related with only the evil characters, and not with the good. Therefore, we are to conclude that there is no universality of truth as to the existence of these supernatural things. And further, Banquo's indifference to the prophecies of the witches clearly proves that at this point of his character he is quite innocent of any criminal purpose of which, however, he stands later suspected as the tragedy develops. This is the essence and significance of the contrast instituted by Shakespeare between the characters of Macbeth and of Banquo.

Notes and Explanations

1. Where have you been since we met last ?

2. *Swine*—pigs. This, according to superstition, is supposed to be the favourite occupation of the witches. The common people believed that witches delighted in causing harm to the domestic animals of farmers by casting evil eyes upon them. In the Middle Ages the sudden and unexpected deaths of hogs were always attributed to witchcraft.

5. *Munched*—chewed with vigorous action of the jaws. *Quoth*—said.

6. *Aroint thee*—begone. *Rump-fed*—several meanings are suggested for this word :—

(1) The Clarendon Press Editors give the meaning 'fed on the best joints ; pampered'. This interpretation gives the best sense. It is only natural that the lean withered hag would be jealous of a fat, pampered sailor's wife. According to this explanation, 'rump' would mean, 'the best joints of meat.'

(2) Some other editors suggest exactly the opposite sense. 'Offal-fed,' i.e., ill-fed, half-starved. Rump is the refuse of portion of meat given in rich households to their servants. They prefer this meaning because they think it would agree with the epithet 'ronyon,' unclean creature, which immediately follows.

(3) Some other explanations, for the most part far-fetched, have also been offered. Feed on nuts, 'rump' meaning nuts.

(4) Fat-bottomed, referring to the immorality attributed to the wives of sailors. *Ronyon*—unclean creature. A scabby or mangy woman.

7. *Aleppo*—The capital of a small province in the north of Syria. The Elizabethan age was an age of explorations and discoveries and the people as a whole were tremendously interested in foreign countries. The mention of Aleppo gives a touch of realism to this scene. *Tiger*—the name of a ship. Probably there is some typical allusion in these lines the key to which is lost to us.

8. *Sieve*- A utensil with cross wires or hairs stretched across the bottom used to filter liquids. In giving this power to the witches Shakespeare is following the super-

stitious beliefs of the time. It was believed that the witches could sail on the tempestuous seas in a sieve, cockle-shell, or egg-shell, ride on broomsticks, and create disturbance in nature. Scot mentions this in his *Discoveries of Witchcraft.* (See Introduction : Witches.)

9. *Like* in the shape of. *Rat . . . tail*—again in accordance with popular superstition. The witches could transform themselves into animals; such animals might always be recognised by the absence of tails.

10. *I'll do*—I will do mischief; I will gnaw a hole at the bottom of his boat. This is only guess work. The threat is vague and undefined like everything else about them. As she cannot sink the ship, gnawing a hole at the bottom cannot be a serious threat.

11. *I'll . . . wind*—the witches were supposed to have control over winds. Winds were often sold to sailors in three knots by old women who professed to have control over them. The following extract from the *Golden Bough* is illuminating : 'Finnish wizards used to sell wind to storm-strayed mariners. The wind was enclosed in three knots; if they undid the first knot, a moderate wind sprang up; if the second, it blew half a gale; if the third, a hurricane.'

14. *I myself . . . other*—I have all the other winds at my command so that I need not accept your kind offer of helping me with winds.

15. *Blow . . . blow upon*—the first witch had control over the very ports upon which the winds blow.

16. *Quarters*—direction. The winds blow in all the directions they know. The witches profess to have the power of making the winds blow in any direction they like.

17. *I' . . . card*—It may mean either the navigator's chart or the mariner's compass upon which the 32 points are marked. On the navigator's chart we get 'geographical description of coasts, the true distances, heights and courses of winds.'

18. *Drain him*—I will drain away the blood from his body and make him wither up.

20. *Pent-house lid*—his eyelid. A pent-house is a sloping projection from the wall of a house to shelter it from

storm. *Hang upon*—weigh down ; his eyelids shall never be weighed down with sleep, or, in other words, he shall not be able to sleep.

21. *A man forbid*—a man under a curse or a magic charm ; a man bewitched.

22. *Weary . . . nine*—for a monotonous period of eighty-one weeks. Odd numbers are generally considered unlucky, but they are the favourite numbers of the fairies. 3, 9, 81, etc.

23. *Dwindle*—droop away ; wither ; shrivel up. *Peak and pine*—grow pinched and waste away.

The witches were supposed to possess the power to do injury to an enemy by practising charms on a waxen image of his. Scot in his *Discoveries of Witchcraft* mentions this practice of the witches. Holinshed relates how King Duff of Scotland was once influenced by the spell of certain witches.

Perhaps Shakespeare has in mind the Act passed under James I which provides for cases of this type : 'whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed, in his or her body or any part thereof.'

24. *Bark*—ship. *Cannot be lost*—the powers of the witches are not unlimited. They derive their power from Satan, and hence cannot influence human will. They can be influenced only if men renounce God. Evidently the sailor's wife is a devout woman and, therefore, the witches can only torment her husband but can never destroy him.

25. *Tempest-tost*—tossed about by the storm. It is suggested that there is a reference in these lines to a personal experience of King James when he returned to England from Denmark. His ship was tossed about in the sea, and some old women, who were supposed to have been responsible for it, were punished.

28. *Pilot*—steersman.

29. *Wrecked*—whose ship was wrecked as he sailed home, probably through the powers of the witches. The witches gloat in misery. Their malignity is inexhaustible : they take fiendish delight in the agonies of others.

32. *Weird sisters*—the sisters of destiny. The expres-

sion is used by Holinshed in his chronicle. *Hand in hand*—joining their hands together and thus forming a circle.

33. *Posters . . . land*—swift travellers over land and sea.

34. *About*—around.

37. *Wound up*—finished ; complete ; ready to be used. *Peace*—hold peace ; stop uttering the charms.

34—37. The witches join their hands together and dance in a ring, singing their incantations three times for each witch, thereby making up the total of nine.

38. Macbeth's words are almost an echo of the words of the witches in the first scene 'Fair is foul and foul is fair.' Possibly the resemblance between these two lines is intentional and as Professor Allardyce Nicoll points out, there is one connection between the soul of Macbeth and those of the witches, i.e., in both there is the confusion between good and evil. Macbeth is not wholly free of guilty thoughts ; there is in his nature an aptitude for crime, a predisposition for evil.

The passage may be taken as an example of Dramatic Irony. It conveys something more to the audience, whether the resemblance between the passage is deliberate or merely accidental.

(1) *Foul*—stormy. *Fair*—bright and sunny. The day is very uncertain, now bright and sunny, but soon becoming dark and stormy.

(2) *Foul and fair*—a day on which they have seen both reverses and success. In the early part of the struggle the fortunes of the battle were wavering, often attended with reverses.

(3) Some editors apply 'foul' to the stormy weather, and 'fair' to the victories of Macbeth.

The first meaning is preferable. Banquo enquires the distance to Forres which suggests that he is afraid of losing his way on account of the heavy mist and stormy weather. Again the constant mingling of warmth and sunshine with gloom and darkness corresponds with the admixture of good and bad elements in Macbeth's soul.

39. *Is't called*—is it said to be ? Banquo first mistakes the witches to be human beings and asks the question.

40. *Withered*—shrivelled up. *Wild*—grotesque; queer.

41. *That look . . . earth*—they are so queer in their dress that they do not look like human beings, like people live on the earth.

42. *And . . . on't*—and yet they are seen on the earth. *Live you?*—are you living beings? *Aught*—anything.

43. *That . . . question*—are you anything whose existence man should suspect or doubt?

(2) Are you creatures with whom man can communicate through speech?

44. *At once*—together; simultaneously. *Chappy*—chapped; covered with cracks. Banquo perceives that they can understand his speech, because each of them had placed her chappy hands on her skinny lips as a signal not to speak.

46. *Forbid . . . interpret*—in spite of your womanly appearance your beards prevent me from inferring that you are women.

47. *You are so*—you are women.

48. *All hail*—all welcome.

48—50. It is interesting to notice how the witches address Macbeth. The first greets him with the title, the thane of Glamis; the second, the thane of Cawdor; and the last hails him with the title, king. From this some critics draw a distinction in the functions of the three witches. The first witch is concerned with the past, the second with the present, and the third takes cognizance of the future.

51. *Why do you start?*—suggests the guilty mind of Macbeth. The thought of crime is there, although it has not been beaten into any shape as yet. Throughout, Banquo's attitude is one of idle curiosity, whereas Macbeth is seriously concerned about the prophetic utterances. With his violent imagination, the moment it is suggested to him that he will be king of Scotland, the vision of Duncan's murder comes before him. It must be noted here that Macbeth is a free agent. His will power is not paralysed. He falls in with the prophecy of the witches only because of his character; his inordinate ambition.

52. *Things . . . fair*—predictions which hold only bright things for you. *I' the . . . truth*—answer me, in the name of truth.

53. *Fantastical*—imaginary ; figment ; mere product of fancy. *Indeed*—really ; actually.

54. *Which . . . show* - what you outwardly appear to be. Are you really old women as you seem to be ? *Partner*—co-general, comrade.

55. *With present grace*—the title which he already bears, i.e., the thane of Glamis. *Great prediction*—great prophetic utterances ; high promises, i.e., the hope of royalty.

56. *Noble having*—noble possession, the thane of Cawdor. *Royal hope*—the prophecy of his becoming king. This passage has been interpreted in two ways :—

(1) You greet my noble partner with present grace of noble possession, and with great prediction of royal hope. In this case his noble possession is his present title. But 'noble having' is too far removed from present 'title' to qualify it.

(2) You greet my noble partner with his present title, predict him a nobler possession, and even present him the prospect of his becoming king one day. This interpretation would correspond respectively to the three witches.

57. *That withal* - it has thrown him into a fit of musing. *Withal*—with it.

58. *Look . . . time*—If you can examine events which take place now, and say which will come to a successful issue, and which will not ; if you can look into the future and predict what would happen.

59. *Which grain . . . not*—and predict which will come to pass and which will not. Say which seed will sprout and which will perish.

60. *Who . . . hate*—Banquo is indifferent, unmoved. He does not consider seriously the prediction of the witches. In this he is a striking contrast to Macbeth who is seriously concerned ; the predictions of the witches are only an echo of the thoughts he had nourished in his mind.

65. *Lesser*—These words are enigmatic to Banquo without further explanation, which is provided by the third

witch. Banquo is lesser than Macbeth because he would not be a king like him. But he would be greater than Macbeth because from him would arise a line of kings.

66. Another enigma carrying the same explanation. Banquo cannot be as fortunate as Macbeth because he would not become king; but he would be more fortunate, since Banquo's sons are to inherit the crown and become kings of Scotland. Robert Bruce III who became king of Scotland was a descendant of Banquo. *Happy*—fortunate.

67. *Thou . . . kings*—you are destined to beget kings. You are ordained by fate to be the founder of a royal dynasty.

70. *Stay*—remain. Macbeth asks the witches to remain a little longer so that he might ask them a few questions. *Imperfect speakers*—speakers who do not give the full meaning; those who speak only of what they mean. Their language is obscure, is a riddle, and hence imperfect.

71. *Sinel's death*—According to Holinshed, Sinel was the father of Macbeth. After his death Macbeth became the thane of Glamis.

72-73. The thane of Cawdor lives. Some discrepancy has been noted in these lines. In Scene 2, lines 52—64, it is mentioned how the false thane of Cawdor had helped the king of Norway. But Macbeth, the general of Duncan's forces, seems not to be aware of it, which is indeed singular. The difficulty can be got over if we suppose that the thane of Cawdor did not actually take part in the fight but only sent reinforcements. We have again to consider that the help rendered by the thane of Cawdor was a close secret and that Macbeth was not aware of it.

(2) Perhaps Macbeth deliberately pretends ignorance of the fate of the thane of Cawdor to hoodwink the witches. But as against this, it might be said that Macbeth continues this attitude of ignorance even towards Ross later in the scene.

(3) Some critics consider this scene spurious. The text here is extremely corrupt. (See Introduction Textual: Un-Shakespearian Passages).

74. *Stand . . . belief*—to believe that I will be king one day is outside the range of even the wildest imagination.

With no stretch of imagination could I conceive the possibility of my becoming king one day.

75. *No more Cawdor*—just as it seems unlikely that I shall be the thane of Cawdor. *Owe*—possess. *Strange intelligence*—strange information.

77. *Blasted heath*—withered; desolate; blighted. The heath presents a desolate appearance as though it had been struck by lightning. *Our way*—stop us on our way.

78. *Prophetic greeting* - greetings denoting future events; greetings containing a prediction of events. *Charge*—command. Macbeth is eagerly anxious, he is even imperious in his attitude.

79. *The earth . . . has*—the earth has also unsubstantial shapes as water has bubbles. Notice the difference in attitude of the two. Banquo is indifferent, but amazed; Macbeth, on the other hand, is excited.

80 *These . . . them*—these witches are of that type, i.e., bubble. Banquo's view of the witches is quite rational.

81. *Corporal*—corporeal; substantial.

82. *Would*—I wish.

83. Banquo is not sure about what he has seen. Were such creatures, as we speak about, actually present here? Were we really talking to some living beings or is it merely a figment of our own imagination?

84-85. *The insane root*—the root of a tree which, if eaten, would induce madness. Cunningham explains: 'It is not easy to discover what plan Shakespeare had in his mind, whether hemlock or henbane, or deadly night shade.' The idea is drawn by Shakespeare probably from Plutarch's "Life of Antony." We find often and again mention of this root in Elizabethan plays, Greene has said: 'you have eaten of the roots of hemlock, that make men's eyes conceive unseen objects.'

85. *Takes . . . prisoner*—which deadens or impairs the reasoning powers of the mind, its powers of discrimination and judgment.

87. *Went it not so*—did they not predict that way?

88. *Self same*—very same. *Tune and words*—that

was exactly the significance.

89. *Happily*—received with happiness.

90. *Success*—victory.

91. *The personal venture*—your personal exploits ; your deeds of arms ; your bravery.

92 93. His feelings of wonder and admiration struggle against each other. There is a conflict as to which is greater ; his own wonder or his praises of Macbeth. Prof. Grierson's note makes the meaning clear, 'Thine goes with praises ; his with wonders. Praises expressed would belong to Macbeth ; wonder unuttered would remain with Duncan. His praise of the doer is silence by wonder of the deed.'

93. *Silenced*—made dumb, tongue-tied. *With that*—with these conflicts of feelings.

94. *In .... day*—In reviewing the incidents the very same day. *Self-same*—very same.

95. *In the stout ... ranks*—he finds you fighting against the valient Norwegian forces.

96. *Nothing ... make*—not in the least terrified at the sight of what you yourself made (slaughter).

97. *Strange ... death*—the ghastly forms in which the dead bodies appeared ; slain bodies were the ghastly images of death. *Thick*—fast, falling quickly. Folio reading 'As thick as tale' does not make any sense.

98. *Post with post*—one messenger on the heels of another ; messenger after messenger.

99. *Thy ... defence*—thy magnificent deeds in the defence of the kingdom.

100. *Poured down*—showered down ; rapidly narrated.

102. *Herald thee*—to announce your arrival. A herald is a royal messenger.

103. *Pay thee*—we are not sent by the king to fully reward you.

104. *For an earnest*—as a security, pledge, promise. This is only a pledge for the greater honours that Duncan might bestow on you.

106. *In which addition*—in which title.

107. *What . . . true* - Banquo is surprised at the partial fulfilment of the prediction of the witches. The words suggest that Banquo also is ignorant of the fate of Cawdor. His treachery is perhaps known only to a few.

108-109. *Why . . . robes*—why do you invest me with borrowed titles ? Macbeth is agitated but keeps himself under studied self-restraint. The metaphor is drawn from the stage.

109. *Who was*—the person who was ; he who was. *Lives yet* - the person is alive, but is no longer the thane of Cawdor.

110. *Under . . . judgment*—under a heavy sentence, i.e., the sentence of death.

111. *Deserves to lose*—he deserves to lose his life being a traitor to his country and king. *Combined*—criminally allied ; entered into a league.

112. *Line the rebel*—help or strengthen the rebel.

113. *Hidden help* - secret help. *Vantage*—advantage ; opportunity ; secret assistance and the advantages derived therefrom.

114. *Laboured . . . wreck*—worked for the destruction of his country.

115. *Treason capital . . . . proved*—offences against the state punishable by death. Treasons against the state punishable by death have been proved against him and he himself has confessed thereto.

116. *Overthrown him* - have brought his ruin.

117. *The greatest is behind* - the most important prediction is yet to be fulfilled. Macbeth's ambition is set aflame at the partial realisation of the prediction of the witches.

120. *Promise . . . to them*—promised no less than they shall be kings. *Trusted home*—trusted implicitly.

121. *Might . . . crown*—might yet encourage you to aspire for the crown. *Yet* - even after you have become the thane of Cawdor. The passage reveals the innate nobility of Banquo. He realises that Macbeth has been greatly agitated by the prophecies and warns him in a half-serious, half-jocular way.

122. *'tis strange*—it is something unusual and out of the way; it is a mystery.

123. *Win . . . harm*—to bring us to ruin; to lure us to peril.

124. *Instruments of darkness*—agents of Satan; the witches derive their powers from Satan.

125. *Win . . . trifles*—attract us by predicting rightly in unimportant matters. *Betray*—deceive

126. *In consequence*—to deceive us in matters of the deepest moment or importance. Banquo's words are quite in accordance with the superstitious beliefs of the time. These devils, or evil powers, deal honestly in unimportant matters thereby gaining the confidence of the people, and lead them to their ruin, as is done in the case of Macbeth.

127. *Cousins*—commonly used among the nobles while addressing one another.

127—129. *Two truths . . . . theme. Happy*—joyful; giving happiness. *Prologue*—the introductory address before the commencement of the play; here precursors; something that goes before. *Swelling act*—the act in a drama in which the most important event takes place. *Of the imperial theme*—in which the story or subject matter is the seizing of the throne.

To Macbeth the drama has only just begun. The partial fulfilment of the prediction is only a prologue. The important events like the dethronement of kings, and seizing of the thrones are yet to take place.

The passage throws light on the character of Macbeth. He is ambitious. The seed of evil is in his mind, and it is already sprouting. Coleridge comments on his soliloquy: 'Every word of his soliloquy shows the early birth-date of his guilt. He is all-powerful, without strength; he wishes the end, but is irresolute as to the means; conscience distinctly warns him, and he lulls it imperfectly.' Lacking the moral courage to do owing to the sparks of nobility in his character, he fondly hopes that the third prediction 'Thou shall be king hereafter' will also be fulfilled.

130. *Soliciting*—inciting. Note the respective attitudes of Banquo and Macbeth towards the witches. To Macbeth,

they are supernatural beings; Banquo, on the other hand, considers them only as 'instruments of darkness.'

131. *Cannot . . . . good*—they cannot be completely evil; neither can they be fully good. His conscience awakens in his heart a vague suspicion that everything is not all right, but he resolutely smothers it and tries to convince himself that there is nothing wrong.

132. *Earnest of success*—pledge, guarantee, or assurance of success.

133. *Commencing . . . truth*—starting with truth, i.e., by partial fulfilment of the prediction.

134. *If good*—if they are instruments of good. *Suggestion*—temptation; the temptation to win the throne by treachery; by the murder of Duncan.

135. *Whose horrid image*—the dreadful sight of the murder of Duncan conjured up by his imagination. *Unfix my hair*—the gruesome sight makes my hair stand on end. The passage reveals Macbeth's violent imagination. The very thought of the crime brings before his mind the horrid image of the murdered king. This unrestrained imagination coupled with his weak will is responsible for his final fall.

136. *Fixed heart*—firmly fixed heart; his heart beats violently at the very thought of the crime.

137. *Against . . . nature*—against the custom of nature, against usual custom, in a way contrary to what is normal. *Present fears*—fears which one has to face at once.

138. *Horrible imaginings*—horrible fears which are the products of wild imagination.

137-138. Actual dangers and fears are easier to bear than the images of terror called up by one's imagination. Macbeth is brave in the presence of dangers, which have to be met at once, but is entirely unnerved by visions regarding future.

139. *My thought . . . fantastical*—to my mind murder is as yet only an imaginary possibility. *Fantastical*—creation of imagination or fancy.

140. *Shakes . . . man*—so unsettles the kingdom of my mind. *State*—kingdom; country. *Function*—power of action.

141. *Smother'd in surmise*—covered over by empty conjecture.

141-142. *Nothing is . . . not*—nothing exists for me except what is unreal.

140—142. The kingdom of my mind is so disturbed and unsettled through fear that action is completely drowned in conjecture, and nothing exists for me except those that do not exist. Several interpretations have been offered for 'single state of man':—

(1) 'State' meaning country or kingdom. So disturbs the kingdom of my mind.

(2) 'State' is used in the sense 'condition'—so unsettles the single condition of my mind, i.e., my mind where all the faculties act in harmony and in complete accord. *Single*—united, undivided.

142. *Rapt*—immeresed in thought.

143. Macbeth cannot come to a decision. If chance or fate wishes to have me as king, the same chance may possibly crown me also, without my doing anything at all in the matter. *Stir*—without any action on my part.

145. *Strange*—that which one is not accustomed to; new. *Cleave not to their mould*—do not fit closely according to the shape of the body.

Macbeth is quite overpowered by the new honours bestowed on him. It will take some time for him to get accustomed to them. He will feel strange in the new dress for some time, but will gradually get over the sense of strangeness.

146. *But with ... use*—except by getting used to them. *Come . . . may*—let whatever may happen come.

147. *Time and the hour . . . day*—Time and the hour denote a single idea. Even the roughest day will come to an end some time or other. However hard the present condition may be, it is bound to change, and lighter days may be ahead. Even the greatest hardship has to come to an end sooner or later.

148. *Stay . . . leisure*—we are awaiting your convenience.

149. *Give me your favour*—I beg your pardon ; pardon me. *Wought*—puzzled, strained.

151. *Registered*—recorded.

150—152. The trouble you have undertaken on my behalf is recorded in the tablet of my memory which I read every day of my life.

152. *Let us toward*—go toward. The verb of motion is omitted. A very common Elizabethan construction.

153. *Chanced*—happened. *At more time*—at a more convenient time.

154. *The interim having weighed*—having considered it during the interval. *Weighed*—thought over ; pondered.

155. *Free hearts*—open thoughts. Let us talk to each other freely without any reserve.

156. *Till then enough*—we have talked enough on this incident today. We have had enough of it for the present.

SCENE IV.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

Now the rising action of the play begins. In this scene is introduced the major obstacle in the form of the Prince of Cumberland. The minor obstacle being his own conscience and perhaps his own imagination he can stifle and smother. It is only a struggle of the mind. But here is a living obstacle. Macbeth is thoroughly the practical man of action ; he resolves to remove this obstacle which, if not done, would ultimately trip him.

At the end of the scene the story slowly moves forward and gradually approaches the crisis. Duncan's self-invitation has provided the necessary opportunity for Macbeth ; now it is only a matter of getting over the better part of his nature and shutting his eyes against the visions conjured up before him. He has only to nerve himself to do the deed.

Duncan's gracious nature is well revealed in this scene. He has entire confidence in Macbeth. Being incapable of treachery himself, and judging everyone by his own standard, the possibility of Macbeth turning traitor does not

enter his mind even for one brief moment. Shakespeare is deliberately making Duncan the noble monarch, so that Macbeth's crime may appear all the more heinous and contemptible. In this he differs from Holinshed. Holinshed's Duncan is suspicious of Macbeth and is quite on the alert to detect any sign of treachery on the part of his general.

Irony, that important dramatic device, now comes forth prominent in the play. Macbeth affirms his loyalty to the king, but his mind is far away weaving schemes of wickedness. The king piously wishes that the face of a person would be an index of his mind ; that by some art it would be possible for one to read the thoughts of another by merely looking at his face.

> There's no art
> To find the mind's construction in the face
> He was a gentleman on whom I built
> An absolute trust :

The new thane of Cawdor, before he is firmly established in his position, is already plotting against his sovereign.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Is . . . Cawdor*—has the sentence of death on Cawdor been carried out ?

2. *In commission*—entrusted with the task ; those commissioned or charged to carry out the sentence. *Liege*—lord.

3. *Spoke*—spoken.

5. *Very frankly . . . treasons*—he openly confessed his crimes.

6. *Implored*—begged. *Highness's*—majesty's. *Set forth*—showed ; displayed.

7. *Nothing in his life*—nothing done in the whole of his life.

8. *Became him* - fitted him so well ; was more creditable to him.

9. *Had been . . . death*—he died like one who had studied to do it.

7—9. The thane of Cawdor met his death like a brave man. No action of his while alive did credit to him so much as the way in which he left it. He died like a person who has studied to face death. Malcolm refers to the calmness and nobility displayed by the thane of Cawdor just before his execution.

These lines have nothing to do with the development of the plot; they do not contribute in any way to the story. It is a stage device introduced so that some time may be given to Macbeth and Banquo who had just retired from the stage to return.

Some find in these lines a reference to the death of the Earl of Essex who was once a very great favourite of Queen Elizabeth. The Earl of Essex was tried and condemned in 1601. Before his death he confessed, repented and asked forgiveness of the queen.

10. *Dearest . . . owed*—his life.

11. *As . . . . . trifle*—as if it were a thing of no value whatever.

11-12. *There . . . face*—there is no skill by which we can interpret the mind of a man by looking at his face. *Find mind's construction*—interpret the mind; discover the workings of the mind.

14. *Absolute trust*—complete trust. He was a gentleman whom I trusted implicitly. Note the dramatic irony. (See Critical Comments, Act I, Sc. 4). *O worthiest cousin*—O noble kinsman. Note again the dramatic irony. What a contrast between the warmth of Duncan's welcome and the murderous thoughts in the bosom of Macbeth!

15-16. *The sin . . . on me*—I was even now regretting that I have not been able to reward your services properly. I have been feeling disturbed at being forced to remain like an ungrateful man.

16. *Was . . . me*—was feeling oppressed by my ingratitude.

16—18. *Thou art . . . overtake thee*—your services are so great that nothing I can do would be an adequate reward. *Swiftest . . . recompense*—reward moving as swiftly as it could. Macbeth continues to deserve reward by his meri-

torious deeds much faster than Duncan can bestow them on him. The metaphor is one bird swiftly pursuing another in vain and unable to catch up with it.

19-20. *Proportion*—due proportion.

(1) So that it might have been in my power to thank and reward you in due proportion to your services, i.e. according as you deserve.

(2) Another explanation has also been offered. Some editors take it as 'proportion of thanks to payment,' i.e. 'proportion between empty words of thanks and solid substantial reward.' But this explanation is too far-fetched.

20. *Only . . . say*—the only thing that is left for me to say ; all I have got to say is.

21. *More . . . pay*—you deserve more than I can ever pay, i.e. your services are of such a high nature that they cannot be adequately rewarded.

22-23. *The service . . . itself*—(1) Duty of serving you. (2) Loyal service. The duty of serving and being loyal to you, in the very performance of it, brings its own reward. The satisfaction that he is doing his appointed duty is the highest reward for him. Macbeth does not look to any other kindness at the king's hands. *In doing it*—in accomplishing it ; in rendering it. *Pay itself*—is itself a reward. *Your part*—your assigned part ; what your majesty has to do.

24. *Is to . . . duties*—is to accept the services we render you.

24-25. *And our duties . . . servants*—we owe our duty to the king and the country, as children do to their parents and servants to their masters. As loyal subjects it is our duty to obey and serve you.

26. *Which . . . should*—who do what they are bound to do.

27. *Safe toward . . . honour*—three interpretations are offered. (1) *Safe toward*—(doing everything), that is sure to show you. Doing everything that is sure to show the love and honour we bear towards you. (2) *Safe toward*—'directly aiming to secure.' We will do everything which will keep safe your love and honour. (3) Do everything to·

wards your safety, love and honour.

28-29. *Begun . . . thee*—by conferring on you the thaneship of Cawdor. *Labour*—strive. *To make . . . growing*—to foster your growing. The metaphor is drawn from gardening. I have sown the seed of your greatness by bestowing the dignity of the thane of Cawdor. Now, just as a gardener would anxiously watch the growth of his cherished plant so also I will watch you and foster your growth by raising you to the highest degree of greatness.

Note the Irony. Grierson's comment is very apt : 'It is watered by Duncan's blood that Macbeth will grow.'

30-31. *Nor must . . . done so*—it must be known that you have distinguished yourself as well as he. This double negative is a characteristic feature of the Old English Syntax.

31. *Infold*—enfold ; embrace.

33. *The harvest is your own*—the fruit will be yours. Any prosperity I attain under your fostering care will always be at the service of your majesty. *Plenteous*—abundant ; overflowing.

34. *Wanton in fulness*—unchecked in its exuberance ; joy bubbling over. *Seek to hide themselves*—attempt to hide their real nature.

35. *Drops of sorrow*—tears.

36. *Whose . . . nearest*—those who are nearest to me in kin and rank.

37. *Establish . . . upon*—arrange for the inheritance of my kingdom by ; settle the succession to the throne on.

39. *The Prince of Cumberland*—originally the crown of Scotland was not hereditary. The successor was elected during the lifetime of the king and the title 'Prince of Cumberland' was given to him. It corresponds to the title of Prince of Wales in England.

40. *Unaccompanied*—it will not be unaccompanied by titles conferred on others, i.e. others also will be invested with appropriate honours during the investiture of Malcolm.

41. *Signs of Nobleness*—insignia of noble rank.

42. *From . . . Inverness*—verb of motion omitted. Duncan invites himself to the castle of Macbeth.

43. *Bind . . . you*—(1) become bound closer to you by bonds of affection. (2) Make myself still further indebted to you.

44. *The rest . . . you*—the leisure that is not spent in your service is as irksome to me as hard labour.

45-46. *Harbinger*—forerunner; I myself will be the messenger bearing the news of your arrival to my wife which will certainly gladden her. *Hearing*—ears. More irony. Duncan does not realise how happy Lady Macbeth would be to hear the news of his arrival.

48. *That is a step*—may be explained in two ways: (1) The action of proclaiming his son heir-apparent which I must either fight against or fall under.

(2) Obstacle. The first major obstacle, i.e. Malcolm. He is a stumbling block for Macbeth's aspirations, a new obstacle to thwart his plans. *O'erleap*—leap clear.

51. *Black and deep desires*—wicked desires; the murderous desires in his heart. Being highly imaginative by nature the very thought of the crime makes him excited.

52. *The eye . . . hand*—let not my eyes take notice of the deeds of my hand. *Wink at*—seem not to see. *Yet let that be*—yet let it be done, i.e. let my hand commit the murder.

54. *Full so valiant*—fully so valiant; as brave as you portray him.

55. *And . . . fed*—I am fed with praises on him, i.e. to hear his praises is food to me.

56. *Banquet*—feast. *Let's after him*—let us go.

57. *Whose care . . . welcome*—who being anxious for our comforts has gone to prepare a reception for us. *Whose care*—who in his care.

58. *Peerless*—incomparable; of unequalled worth.

Scene V.

Analysis of the Scene.

Lady Macbeth is found re-reading a letter from Macbeth.

Macbeth in his letter acquaints the partner of all his joys and greatness, about the prediction of the witches, the partial fulfilment of the utterances, so that she should not lose any part of it. The letter sets Lady Macbeth thinking. Already he is the thane of Glamis and the thane of Cawdor too. There is no reason why the last prophecy should not be fulfilled. Yet she is afraid of his mild nature ; his moral scruples. Macbeth is not without ambition. Neither is he seriously concerned about the moral scruples of his action. But still he might not like to plunge himself headlong into the deed. She will, however, screw up his courage and make him do the deed.

Now a messenger arrives with the news of the arrival of Duncan. The sudden and welcome message throws Lady Macbeth completely off her balance for the time being. Her imagination runs riot, the very raven now to her is croaking the fated entrance of Duncan into Macbeth's castle. She invokes the aid of the 'spirits that tend on mortal thoughts' to divest her of her womanhood, remove from her heart the tender feelings of pity and remorse and fill her from head to toe with bitterest gall.

Macbeth arrives at the castle and is met by Lady Macbeth. She hails him with the two titles he already has and the one yet to come. She has all her plans ready for the royal reception of Duncan. Macbeth should only wear a smiling face ; she will look to everything else.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The character of Lady Macbeth is a striking contrast to that of her husband. She straightaway realises that the way to the throne is only through the pool of blood—the blood of Duncan. She does not toy with the thoughts of murder like her husband but immediately arrives at a decision. The murder of the king alone can make good the prediction of the witches. She deliberately diverts herself of her womanhood and "appears almost a virago of abnormal depravity and forbidding aspect." But we should not be rash in our estimation of her, should not judge her entirely through her spirit in this scene ; in spite of all these she is essentially a woman in her heart. (See Lady Macbeth's Character.)

Thus, giving the semblance of cruelty to Lady Macbeth, is highly necessary from an artistic point of view, because our sympathy has to be stirred for the hero despite his inordinate ambition, depite his heinous crime. The only way this could be done is by minimising the offence of Macbeth, by making us understand that Macbeth is dragged into the plot much against his will and only after a violent struggle with the better part of his nature. Shakespeare has to retain the sympathy of the audience for the hero against odds and for this purpose Lady Macbeth, to all outside appearances, is made the chief plotter.

The importance of the letter read by Lady Macbeth should be noted. The point is that the letter is intended to confirm our impression about the existence of an under-current of evil already inspected by us in the character of Macbeth in the earlier scene where we found him standing 'rapt withal' by the prophecies of the witches. This initial impression of the audience is here supplemented by the dramatic use of the letter. Thus the letter is a clear proof and indicates the undoubted fact that Lady Macbeth and her husband had already discussed the possibility of Duncan's murder, and that several letters had passed between them regarding this subject. This present letter is only one of the many that each had been writing to the other.

Further, the letter suggests another thing. It is one of the artistic devices which Shakespeare habitually employs in order to show the audience what has taken place behind the scenes as contrasted with what has already happened on the stage. Thus the letter tells us what the characters are doing while they are off the stage. This is a point of dramatic economy and is here employed because if all the intervening and preceding actions of Macbeth are represented on the stage itself, such a representation would spoil the action by making it too long. In order to avoid this Shakespeare gives all the necessary information by introducing a relevant portion of this correspondence (in the letter quoted) between Lady Macbeth and her husband.

The scene takes us back to the minor obstacles which we had confronted earlier—Macbeth's scruples about the

deed. We have already seen how the witches by their predictions had partially dispelled Macbeth's fears about the moral issue of the action, making him look on the deed as something preordained. Lady Macbeth, fully aware of the weakness of her husband's nature, resolves to embolden him by her natural courage and strength of will thus finishing the work which the witches had started earlier.

Notes and Explanatians

1. *In . . . success*—on the day of victory.

2. *By . . . . report*—by the most perfect testimony ; by unimpeachable evidence Macbeth perhaps means that he has verified the professed powers of the witches. By the perfect testimony of subsequent events, i.e. the partial fulfilment of the predictions of the witches.

3. *Mortal . . . . knowledge*—knowledge such as human beings possess. The witches possess more than human knowledge because they can look into the future.

4. *They . . . . air*—they melted into the air.

5-6. *While . . . . it*—while I stood absorbed in the wonder of it. *Rapt*—engrossed. *Wonder of it*—at this unusual spectacle ; at this miraculous sight.

6. *Missives*—messengers. *All-hailed*—greeted.

7. *Weird*—unearthly *Saluted*—had greeted.

8. *Referred . . . . time*—let my mind into the future ; made me consider the future ; directed my thoughts to future honours.

9. *Deliver*—communicate ; impart ; disclose.

10. *The dues of rejoicing*—the legitimate right to share in my joy.

11. *What greatness . . . thee*—the greatness or honour of becoming Queen of Scotland.

12. *Lay . . . . heart*—consider this seriously.

13. *Shalt be*—the mind of Lady Macbeth is already made up. Note her determination.

14. *What. . . promised*—what you have been promised, i.e. king. *I fear*—I have misgivings ; I do not have confidence in.

15. *'The milk of human kindness'*—an oft quoted passage. Shakespeare takes special pains to set Macbeth in the best light so that we might not turn away from him as a common murderer. Various explanations have been offered :

(1) 'The feelings of tenderness and gentleness are characteristic of kindly people'. This explanation cannot be accepted because nowhere else in the play do we find any reference to this human disposition of Macbeth. It is quite inconsistent with the character of Macbeth.

(2) Moulton's explanation gives better meaning. He gives the meaning human kindness, i.e. human nature and explains 'natural inherited, traditional feelings, imbibed at the mother's breast.' *Milk*—some editors see a suggestion of cowardliness in the word 'milk.' But Shakespeare often uses the word when he refers to 'things of gentle influence' e.g. 'adversity's sweet milk, philosophy.'

16. *To catch . . . way*—take advantage of. *The nearest way*—the shortest route—the murder of Duncan. *Thou . . . great*—you have a desire to be great.

17. *But without*—but are without.

18. *Illness*—wickedness. *Attend it*—accompany it, i.e. ambition. Ambition is always attended with unscrupulous actions. You desire to be great but without the wickedness which alone will crown ambition. *What . . . highly*—what you highly wish ; the most cherished desire of your heart.

19. *That . . . holily*—that you desire to obtain without swerving from the path of virtue ; by innocent means ; by honesty. *Wouldst . . . false*—you will not play false, i.e. be treacherous without which ambition cannot be realised.

20. *Wouldst wrongly win*—would not hesitate to enjoy what is secured by unfair means. Macbeth aspires for the crown. It is obtained by unrighteous ways ; still he would not think twice about enjoying it, what really holds him back is not his moral scruples, but his horror of the crime ; the visions of blood brought before his mind by his susceptible imagination.

21. *That which cries*—the throne of Scotland is the object of Macbeth's ambition. It is personified. *Thus thou must*

do—you must act in this manner ; murder Duncan. *If they have it*—if you are to have it.

22. *And that*—the murder.

(1) Macbeth has no moral scruples about the murder of Duncan. If the deed is done, he would not wish it to be undone ; Macbeth is more afraid to do the deed himself. It is not his conscience, the sense of right and wrong, that withholds him ; it is only his natural horror of blood.

(2) One editor gives a very ingenious interpretation. According to him, 'that' in line 21 refers to 'virtue' which cries out that wrong should not be done in any circumstances. Lady Macbeth is harping upon the inconsistency of her husband's character, and ends, as she began, by saying 'you want to satisfy your conscience and your ambition at the same time.'

23. *Hie*—hasten.

24. *That. . . ear*—so that I may inspire you with my sentiments.

25. *Chastise . . . tongue*—chastise ; drive away. Drive away by brave words of encouragement.

26. *All that impedes thee . . . round*—every scruple that stands in the way of your securing the crown. *Impedes thee*—his own moral scruples and unenterprising nature. *The golden round*—the crown.

27. *Metaphysical*—supernatural.

28. *Withal*—an obsolete form of 'with.'

27-28. Fate and supernatural powers already seem to have elected Macbeth to the throne oi Scotland ; to have crowned him.

28. *Tidings*—news. Used both in singular and plural in Elizabethan English.

29. *Thou 'rt mad to say it*—Lady Macbeth is taken away by surprise. She could not believe the words of the messenger and in her excitement almost betrays herself.

30. *Were't so*—if it were so ; if the news that you bring is true.

31. *Inform'd for preparation*—would have informed so that I might prepare a reception.

32. *So please you*--if it please you.

33. *Had the speed of him*—(1) had the start of him or (2) outrode. He reached the castle earlier because he was able to travel more speedily than Macbeth.

34. *Dead for breath*—dead for want of breath.

34-35. For want of breath the messenger could hardly deliver the message.

35. *Give him tending*—give him attentions ; attend to him.

36. *Great news*—Note the Irony. (1) Most fortunate news, because it affords the opportunity of murdering the weak, old king.

(2) Most welcome, as the messenger would understand it.

37. *Raven*—(1) is always associated with evil, in superstitious minds the cry of the raven was an infallible indication of approaching death. It is considered unlucky to meet a raven at the commencement of a journey, or have one croak on his left hand.

(2) Another explanation offered is that 'the raven' stands metaphorically for the messenger, whose croaking, i.e. hoarse voice bodes calamity. The messenger is out of breath and hoarse.

36. *Fatal*—fated ; culminating in death.

38. *Battlements*—See Act I. ii. 23. The raven croaks itself hoarse announcing the death of Duncan, who is fated to die in the castle of Macbeth. *Spirits*—powers of evil ; her own cruel desires.

39. *Tend*—attend. *Unsex me here*—divest me of my womanhood. Take away my tender womanly feelings for the time being.

40. *From . . . toe*—from head to foot. *Top full*—full to the brim.

41. *Of direst cruelty*—with most terrible and cruel desires. *Make thick my blood*—(1) In the Middle Ages thick bloodedness and cruelty are always associated. One is supposed to be a direct consequence of the other.

(2) Deaden my sensibilities so that I might not feel the crime so acutely.

(3) Curdle up my blood so that there might not be any possibility for kind feelings to course along my veins. *Stop . . . it*—close every opening through which pity and remorse might steal into my heart. Let not any natural pangs of conscience deter me from my hideous purpose, nor stand between my wicked design and the accomplishment of it.

It has already been pointed out how Lady Macbeth is essentially a woman at heart. Note her natural abhorrence of crime. She has all the feminine dread of blood but she steels herself with her will to meet any emergency. *Stop up*—close up. *Access*—entrance. *Remorse*—compassion ; pity.

43. *Compunctious visitings of nature*—natural pangs of conscience.

44. *Fell*—cruel. *Shake ..purpose*—make me weaken in my cruel purpose. *Keep pace between*—intervene between ; keep separate.

45. *The effect and it*—the purpose and the execution of it.

46. *Take . . . . milk*—substitute gall for the milk in my breasts ; embitter everything sweet in me. *Take us*—use us ; change ; infect. *Murdering ministers*—the spirits attending on murderous thoughts.

47. *In your sightless substances*—in your invisible forms.

48. *Wait . . . . mischief*—attend to every mischief that is being carried on in the world. *Nature's mischief*—may be explained in several ways :

(1) The evils done in the world.

(2) "All that is cruel and destructive in the operations of nature" is Verity's explanation.

(3) Mischief done to 'nature,' 'nature' meaning 'human life,' i.e. the destruction of human life.

(4) Johnson gives the following paraphrase : 'Mischief done to nature, violation of nature's order committed by wickedness.'

49. *Pall*—envelop ; conceal. *Dunnest smoke of hell*—darkest smoke of hell.

51. *Blanket of the dark*—the shades of night which shroud the world.

52. *To cry . . . . hold*—to withhold me from the deed.

45—52. These lines are very important in as much as they throw light on the character of Lady Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is not the embodiment of everything evil as sometimes it is suggested she is. She has to invoke her own sterner nature to give her strength and courage to do the deed. She is not callous in the strict sense of the word. She may be the originator of the crime, she may even be said to be morally responsible for the deed, but it must never be thought that Lady Macbeth is a cold-blooded vulgar murderer like Iago. She has finer sensibilities ; but those are stifled at their very birth by her resolute and determined will. Here she is under the tensest excitement ; the frenzied and hysterical words are only the visible expression of a tumult within ; it is only by a really superhuman effort that she escapes a complete breakdown.

53. *All hail*—sovereignty ; kingly title ; a noun here.

54-55. *Thy . . . . present*—has carried me away beyond the present and enabled me to see into the future. *Transported*—carried. *Ignorant*—the present is ignorant because it cannot see into the future.

55 56. *I feel now . . . . instant*—I feel now the future, the glorious career that awaits you at the present moment. *Instant*—at the present time.

58. *Purposes*—plans. This line is an important evidence on the discussion as to whether the plan of murder had already been discussed and arranged. The words 'as he purposes' suggest that the scheme is not new to them. Duncan plans to leave to-morrow, but his plan may not be realised. But the verbal fencing between the husband and the wife, each trying to draw out the other into open speaking, rules out this possibility and establishes beyond doubt that the plan is yet in the making, that nothing has been arranged as yet.

59. *That morrow*—the day on which Duncan leaves the castle shall not dawn. Lady Macbeth is the first to throw discretion to the winds and speak openly.

60-61. *Your face . . . . matters*—your face, my lord, is like a book where one might read strange information. The distraught looks that Macbeth wears reflect the strange thoughts in his mind.

61-62. *To beguile . . . . time*—to deceive the people of our time, i.e. the world, look as the time or the world looks ; assume the looks suitable to hoodwink the world.

62-63. *Bear . . . . tongue*—let hospitable looks beam from your eyes, let your hands grasp his cordial welcome, and let only sweet words befitting a host pour out of your mouth.

63-64. Be treacherous like a deadly serpent lurking under an innocent flower. cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, 'serpent heart hid with a flowering face.'

64-65. *He . . . . for*—(1) everything must be provided for the reception of Duncan who is coming here. The words are said in irony.

(2) *Provided for*—A euphemism for murdered. Duncan who is coming here must be murdered.

65. *Put*—entrust.

66. *This . . . . despatch*—this night's great business—the murder we will commit to-night. *Dispatch*—management ; execution.

67. *Which . . . . masterdom*—which will make us for ever absolute rulers of the country. *Solely*—completely ; absolutely. *Sovereign sway and masterdom*—imperial power and absolute supremacy.

69. *We will speak further*—we will discuss the matter more fully. *Look up clear*—look up with a bright countenance. Let there not be any haggard look on your face : look of innocence.

70. *To . . . . Fear*—change of countenance is always a sign of fear. *Favour*—countenance.

71. Leave everything else to me.

SCENE VI

Analysis of the Scene.

Towards sunset Duncan arrives at the castle of Macbeth,

with his two sons, Malcolm and Donalbain, and several attendant lords. The king is struck by the rustic beauty and repose of the country seat. The air which blows briskly is pleasant and fragrant and extremely soothing to the senses. Banquo shows Duncan the 'temple-haunting martlet,' which builds its nest only where the air is delicious. Now Lady Macbeth enters. The king greets her with great warmth and Lady Macbeth returns the greeting in honeyed words and professes sincere loyalty to the king. Duncan is anxious to meet his brave host, and desires his honoured hostess to conduct him to Macbeth.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The scene opens with a realistic description of natural scenery—the description of the pleasant country seat of Macbeth where the air is soft, mild and delicate. Shakespeare, as a rule, seldom describes scenery, but here he breaks the rule, because by this device he has to achieve a certain artistic effect. The previous scene, we have found, devotes itself to the tumult of evil passions, the wickedness trying for mastery in the heart of Macbeth and the stern repression of her feminine nature by Lady Macbeth. Thus after the emotional strain of the previous scene, this scene gives a happy sense of relief. 'The effect achieved by this brief passage of description brings all the relief felt by a spectator, who leaves the poisoned atmosphere of the over-crowded theatre, for a few seconds' enjoyment of the pure outer air. Then Lady Macbeth enters, and we are back in the devil's 'kitchen.'

The irony which we had noticed in the previous scenes is very prominent here. Duncan's appreciation of the beauty and repose of the castle brings before the minds of the audience the fate that awaits him and which would soon overtake him. Lady Macbeth is Duncan's 'honoured hostess'; she all the while is weaving hideous schemes for the destruction of this simple soul.

The realistic description of this quiet pastoral scene has made many critics conjecture that Shakespeare has actually visited Scotland. (See Introduction : Text.)

Notes and Explanations

1. *Seat*—situation. The castle is charmingly situated.

2. *Nimbly*—briskly. *Recommends itself*—makes itself pleasant.

3. *Gentle senses*—our senses which are soothed or made gentle by the delicate fragrance of the air. Transferred epithet. It is the air that is gentle, not the senses.

2-3. The air which blows briskly proves agreeable to our senses because it is mild and delicately fragrant. Our senses are calmed by the mild, fragrant air blowing briskly.

3. *This guest of summer*—Martin ; it is a migratory bird, visiting England in summer and leaving it in autumn, and fond of frequenting or building its nest in churches.

4. *Temple-haunting matrlet*—fond of frequenting or building its nest in churches. The martin builds its nest under the projecting eaves of churches. *Approve*—prove ; attest.

5. *By ... mansionary*—by making this his loved abode, by building his nest here every year. *Heaven's breath*—the air of heaven ; air.

6. *Smells wooingly*—is sweet and pleasant as is the conduct of a lover towards his sweetheart. *Jutty*—ledge, projecting part of a building. *Freize*—band of decoration below the cornice ; carving on a wall.

7. *Buttress*—a projecting support to a wall. *Coign of vantage*—a corner of advantage ; a suitable corner.

8. *Pendent bed*—hanging nest. *Procreant cradle*—a nest where it lays eggs and rears its young ; cradle of his family.

10. *Delicate*—sweet ; pleasant. The bird has built its nest in every favourable place, and reared its young ones. Banquo has observed that the air is sweet and fragrant wherever this summer bird builds its 'pendent bed.'

11—14. The passage is a much disputed one and various explanations have been suggested :

(1) Sometimes the affection that people bestow on us with insistency is a source of annoyance, but still we put up with it and thank them even because it is love, true and

sincere. So you must bid God reward us for the trouble we give you and thank us for the vexation caused, because it is a token of our love for you.

(2) Hunter explains : 'The affection which urges us to desire society of our friends is sometimes the occasion of trouble to them ; but still we feel grateful for the affection which is manifested. So you are to regard the visit ; and with this view of it you will be disposed to thank us for the trouble which we occasion you.'

11. *Follows*—waits upon. *Is our trouble*—is a source of trouble to us. *Vexation*—annoyance.

12. *Herin*—by this example.

13. *God 'ild us*—God yield us, reward us. *Your trouble*—the vexation which we cause you.

14. *All our service*—all that we can do for you.

15. *In every . . . . done*—in every item done over again. *And . . . . double*—and then again done twofold.

16. *Were*—would be. *Poor*—insignificant. *Single business*—simple thing ; trivial affair. *Contend against*—matched against ; compared with.

17. *Deep and broad*—many honours high and exalted.

14—17. The service we have rendered your majesty, done several times over again, would be an inadequate and trivial recompense when compared with the high dignities with which you have loaded our house every day.

18. *Those of old*—those dignities conferred on us of old.

19. *Late dignities*—recent honours ; dignities newly bestowed on us. *Heaped . . . . them*—added up to them.

20. *We . . . . hermits*—we remain your beadsmen, i.e. we are bouud to pray for you for all the consideration and kindness you have shown us. *Hermits*—beadsmen living on the charity of others and bound to pray for their benefactors.

21. *Coursed . . . . heels*—we pursued him hotly ; followed closely at his heels.

22. *Purveyor*—poverty : an officer of the court whose duty it is to provide the lodging necessary for noble guests.

I had a plan to reach here in advance of him and make arrangement for his reception.

23. *Holp*—helped. His great love for me is another spur which has helped him to ride fast and reach the castle earlier than I did.

26. *Theirs*—their servants. *What is theirs*—what belongs to them, the whole of their fortune. *In compt*—accountable ; something held on trust.

27. *Take their audit*—furnish a statement of accounts ; give the reckoning.

28. *Still*—always ; ever. They themselves, their servants, and the whole of their fortune, belong to the king and is held by them only on trust ; they are ready to submit an account whenever His Majesty is pleased to ask for it.

30. *Graces*—favours.

31. *By your leave hostess*—with your permission hostess—he takes Lady Macbeth's hand so that he might be conducted to his host.

SCENE VII

Analysis of the Scene.

After the banquet Macbeth is still unsettled and lapses into fits of musing. The thought of the crown is foremost in his mind but the way to it is only through the blood of Duncan. Macbeth is unable to make up his mind. If the affairs would end with the murder of Duncan, he certainly would do it, but he is not sure that the crime will not bring in its wake serious consequences. Perhaps later the deed may recoil on the doer. Again how could he violate all the sacred laws of hospitality and bear the knife against Duncan ? He is his kinsman, and what is more, his king. Rather should he shut the door against the murderer than be one himself. Duncan has been a mild king ; his very virtues would protest against his removal. Besides he has no private grievance against the king to goad him on to the crime. No, he will not do the deed.

At this stage in his musing Lady Macbeth enters the stage. Macbeth positively refuses to proceed any further in the matter. But Lady Macbeth's mind is already made up.

She is not the woman to take it lying down. She, with all her womanly vehemence of passion, appeals to his love for her, and his manhood. Macbeth still wavers. Lady Macbeth now uses her last weapon and taunts her husband with cowardice, a taunt which Macbeth's brave nature cannot endure. He succumbs and promises to do the deed, but is afraid that they might fail in their attempt. His wife, however, has no doubts on that point ; the scheme cannot fail. She will drug the two chamberlains so that they will know nothing about what is taking place, and foist the crime on them.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

This scene is one of psychological importance. Macbeth is visited more by scruples of conscience than actual fear of the deed ; he has not his heart fully for it. His heart is not completely bereft of good. There are in his brave nature certain high codes of morality and honour, but for the time being they are completely smothered by his inordinate ambition. His imagination presents before him the picture of the crime as it would be seen by others and Macbeth visibly shrinks before it. A young general cold-bloodedly murdering a feeble gracious king who trusts him implicitly. And that too under his very roof : Macbeth cannot bear to think of it. It will be a violation of not only the laws of hospitality, but also of his sense of manhood. In the early part of the struggle the forces are even and Macbeth wins. But when Lady Macbeth also joins the ranks of his own temptations, there is nothing left for him to do but to surrender.

The contrast of character between the husband and wife is admirably brought out. To a casual reader, Lady Macbeth in this scene seems really the 'fiendish queen' of Malcolm. Previously Macbeth had been hesitating (whether owing to imaginative horror of blood or high moral considerations), but with the advent of Lady Macbeth the irresolution fades away like 'mist before the sun,' he abandons hesitation and succumbs to the temptation.

This scene very fittingly has sometimes been called 'The Scene of Temptation by the Fourth Witch,' Lady Macbeth herself being the Fourth Witch. We have found how the

ambition of Macbeth's heart was first set aflame by the prediction of the witches. But the work is not complete till the Fourth Witch makes her contribution to the store of evils. With the close of this scene Macbeth's temptation is complete; his hesitation ceases and his thoughts are concentrated not on the consequence of the deed but on the deed proper. The close of the First Act is always shaped and determined thus in Shakespeare, on the proper resolution of the earlier or minor obstacle.

It would be interesting to compare Macbeth of the present scene, with those of the later ones. Here Macbeth's mental conflict reaches the height of tragic intensity, his words are those of a person profoundly affected by conflicting passions. The calm, collected scheming Macbeth just before the murder of Banquo is entirely different from the Macbeth we see now. The steady decline in his character is clearly brought out in scene after scene.

Notes and Explanations

1. *If . . . done*—if the affair is over with the deed ; if there is no fear of consequences. *It*—deed ; Duncan's murder. *Done*—done with ; ended. *Then 't were well*—then it would be well.

2. *It were done quickly*—if it was performed quickly.

3. *Trammel*—arrest ; put a stop to. *Catch*—secure ; obtain.

4. *With his surcease*—(1) with the cessation of the act of murder, i.e. as soon as the act of murder is complete.

(2) Duncan's death. *His*—Duncan's. *Surcease*—death. *Success*—realisation of the object aimed at.

4. *That*—if. *But this blow*—this single act of assassination.

5. *Be the . . . here*—be the end of the matter here in the world ; be the end so far as this life is concerned. *Be-all . . . all*—inclusive act.

6. *Bank and shoal of time*—this short span of life with boundless seas on either side. A metaphor in which death is a narrow bank of land only a little above the surface dividing two seas, i.e. the present life and the life to come. *Bank and shoal*—narrow sandbank. *Shoal*—submerged sandbank.

7. *We'd jump*—we would brave the perils ; take the risk of.

(1) If I were sure that a single deadly stroke would be complete in itself, would settle everything finally in our life on this earth, then I would not hesitate to take my chances of the life to come, i.e. Divine Judgment. The 'bank and shoal of time' signifies our brief space of life in the sea of eternity.

(2) Another interpretation has also been offered. The Folio reading is 'School.' If we accept this reading, then 'Bank' may be taken as 'bench'. Elwin explains : 'If here only, upon this bench of instruction, in this school of eternity, I could do this without bringing these, my pupil days, under suffering, I would hazard its effect on the endless time to come.' Life is the school where all kinds of instructions are given. This interpretation, however, is too farfetched.

7. *Still have judgement here*—we always have punishment in this life.

8. *That*—so that. *But*—only ; merely.

9. *Bloody instructions*—instructions in bloody deed ; lessons as to how murder should be committed.

9-10. *Return . . . inventor*—recoils to torment the original criminal. If he teaches murderous lessons to others, after the lesson is taught, they themselves would be tempted to try the same thing on the originator. Macbeth means that the example of murdering Duncan and seizing the throne would prompt others to commit the same crime on him later. The deed may find its way back to the doer, and he himself may have to share the fate of Duncan.

10. *Even-handed justice*—impartial justice.

11. *Commends the ingredients*—offers the contents. *Chalice*—cup.

10-11. Justice is impartial. It awards exact retribution. It is often brought about by this impartial justice that we have to drink the poisoned cup which we have prepared for others. Instead of working harm on others we might do it on ourselves.

12. *Double trust*—double claim to protection. He is king and guest. Macbeth is bound by the double ties of

hospitality and loyalty.

14. *Strong . . . deed*—both reasons stand out strongly against the murder of Duncan.

16. *Bear the knife*—carry the knife.

14-16. The laws of hospitality demand that I, as a host, should save the guest from the clutches of the murderer and not commit murder myself.

17. *Borne . . . meek*—exercised his royal powers so meekly. *Faculties*—powers. *Borne*—carried ; exercised.

18. *Clear . . . office*—so irreproachable in his conduct as king. *Clear*—innocent ; without blemish. *Great office*—highest function in the discharge of his duties as king.

19. *Virtues . . . angels*—the noble qualities in him would plead as convincingly as angels. *Trumpet tongued*—proclaiming his virtues as loudly as a trumpet. It is suggested that there is in this line a reference to the trumpets that the angels sound on 'the Last Day', i.e. the Day of Judgment.

20. *Deep damnation*—the horrible crime that would condemn one in hell ; terrible sin. *Talking off*—euphemism for murder. Note how Macbeth avoids the word 'murder.'

21. *Pity*—pity for Duncan. It is personified here.

22. *Striding the blast*—astride the tempest ; riding upon a storm. Perhaps Shakespeare has in mind the Gaelic belief that the souls of unbaptised infants would go about every place bewailing their sad lot. *Or*—or like. *Heaven's cherubin*—the angels from heaven. *Cherubim*—an order of angels. *Horsed*—mounted on the horse. *Sightless . . . air*—(1) the invisible messengers of the air, i.e. the winds. Gierson's comment on this is illuminating. 'The one figure melts into the other, a single child becomes a host of cherubin. To the logical mind these last lines appear as a whirl of mixed and extravagant metaphors, but their dramatic power as a revelation of the tempest in Macbeth's mind depends on this wildness. More correct poetry would be less appropriate.'

(2) Some think that there is a reference here to the invisible winds described by the Psalmist as having wings and carrying the Divine one.

(3) Still another interpretation has been offered. 'Invisible posters of the divine will that fly unperceived by sense and unaccounted with matter.'

25. *Tears . . . wind*—tears shall flow so abundantly that it shall exhaust the fury of the storm, as a thunderstorm often clears after a heavy downpour. *Drown*—submerge.

21-25. Duncan's murder will awaken pity in the heart of everyone. Pity like a naked babe newly born would ride astride the blast ; the angels of heaven would travel everywhere riding upon the wind showing the horrid crimes to everyone so that enough showers or tears would be shed to lull even the fiercest wind.

25-26. *I have . . . . intent*—I have no grievance to goad me on to my purpose; I have no just cause of complaint to urge me on to my scheme, just as a man spurs on a horse. *Spur*—stimulus ; incentive. *Intent*—purpose. *Prick the sides*—just as a horseman would prick the sides of his horse with his spurs. Spur is a pricking instrument worn on the heels of horsemen.

27. *Vaulting*—over-reaching, inordinate.

27-28. Like a rider who overleaps himself and thereby misses his seat on the horse, so also my inordinate ambition may make me leap clear and thus bring me to my ruin. Too much ambition would itself stand in the way of its realisation ; it causes a man to miss his object, just as a rash rider misses his horse aud seeks the ground on the other side of the animal.

28. *How now*—Macbeth wakes up from his reverie at the entrance of Lady Macbeth with a startled cry.

29. *Why have . . . chamber*—forgetting the duties of a host owing to his preoccupation, and perhaps even embarrassed by the insistent kindness of Duncan, Macbeth has risen from the supper table earlier to toy with the foremost thought in his mind and 'wrestle with his conscience.'

30. *The business*—the plot to murder Duncan.

34. *Newest gloss*—the glamour and novelty which attend all new things. Macbeth would wear the honours which the king has newly heaped on him without casting them away. The metaphor is from a person wearing a new

suit of clothes.

35. *Hope*—hope of becoming king. *Hope drunk*—were your hopes of becoming king merely the distorted working of a mind confused with liquor, were you in your sober senses when you entertained this hope and expressed a wish for the crown?

36. *Wherein . . . yourself*—Lady Macbeth borrows the metaphor of Macbeth. Did you dress yourself in the hopes of a drunken man? *Hath . . . since*—Has your drunken hope slept since to wake up sober?

37. *Green*—sickly, livid complexion. *Green . . . freely?* Do you now turn pale with fear and apprehension at the ambitious projects which you schemed while drunk?

Note the will and determination of Lady Macbeth, a striking contrast to the almost cowering picture of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth lashes her husband mith fiery speeches.

39. *Such . . . love*—from this moment I shall consider your love to be of such a nature, i.e. as fickle as your drunken hopes.

39—41. Are you afraid to carry out in action what you secretly cherish? *Act and valour*—courage to be shown in deeds.

42. *Esteem'st . . . life*—consider as something that would make life worthwhile; something that would adorn, decorate, crown, or add grace to life.

43. *Live . . . . esteem*—live a coward according to your own standards of conduct; like a coward in your own eyes.

44-45. Allowing 'I dare not' to attend on still, 'I wish it.' *Poor cat . . . adage*—'the cat would eat flesh and would not wet her feet'—a well-known proverb of French origin. *Adage*—proverb.

You cherish a desire for the crown in your heart but you are afraid to brave the dangers that lie in the path of your ambition. Are you a man only in your desires and a mere weakling in deeds of arms? Would you allow these contemptible fears to fail your noble aspiration.

The speech reveals the stern masculine nature of Lady

weak
feeble

Macbeth. The dramatist provides Macbeth with twofold excuses. He fell a victim to his own ambition, and ambition is a passion which we can understand and excuse. Again Macbeth had good inclinations, but these were led astray by his almost domineering wife, owing to the weakness of his own disposition.

45. *Prithee*—I pray you.

46. *May become*—is worthy of, be creditable to Macbeth ; recoils against this attack of cowardice.

47. *Who . . . none*—he who attempts more than I do is not a man, i.e. no man can be more daring than I am.

49. *What beast . . . me ?*—were you a beast when you confided these plans to me ? Note the scorn of Lady Macbeth's words. *Durst do it*—had the courage to do it ; dare to do it.

50. *To be . . . were*—by being more courageous than you were.

50-51. When you had the necessary courage and determination to do the deed ; when you could boldly formulate a plan, you were a man. Now, if you could put into action your bold plan you would be so much more manly.

52. *Did then adhere*—were then suitable. *And yet . . . both*—and yet you were prepared to create an occasion and discover an opportune time.

53-54. *They . . . unmake you*—opportunity and time now have conjoined together and now the very fitness of your opportunity confuses you.

Plucked—drawn away with force. *Boneless*—toothless.

58. *Had I so sworn*—if I had so taken a vow.

59. *Done to this*—done now, i.e. to murder Duncan.

Lady Macbeth is relying too much on her will. When it actually comes to the test it is only with all the usual feminine abhorrence that she is able to stand the sight of blood. Lady Macbeth has really the usual womanly instincts ; but she strongly ignores its appeal, and subjects it, like every other emotion in her, to her strong and determined will.

59. *We fail!*—Lady Macbeth scorns the very idea of failure. The words are differently punctuated.

(1) *We fail!*—shows her scorn. It is something incredible.

(2) *We fail?*—shows astonishment.

(3) *We fail.*—imply a calm acceptance of the inevitable. It is our duty to try. If we fail, well, it is something that cannot be helped.

60. *Sticking place*—point at which it will remain fixed.

Screw . . . . place—summon up your courage to the right pitch where it will remain unmoved. The metaphor is drawn from the act of tightening the strings of musical instruments to the right pitch.

62. *Whereto*—to which. *Rather*—sooner.

63. *Chamberlains*—superior servants attending on the king's bed-chamber.

64. *Wassail*—carousing; heavy drinking. *Convince*—overcome, overpower.

66. *Shall be a fume*—shall be foggy; filled with smoke. *Receipt of reason*—receptacle or compartment of the brain where the faculties of reasoning are lodged.

67. *Alimbec only*—only a reservoir.

65—67. I will so overpower the officers of the bed-chamber with wine that memory, which keeps guard over the brain, will be changed into fumes of intoxication and the reasoning faculty would be completely deadened. The receptacle for brains would only be a gas reservoir.

According to the medieval theory of anatomy, brain was divided into three compartments. In the middle compartment is lodged reasoning faculty, so that when the memory is overcharged with fumes of intoxication it would rush into the central compartment and paralyse the reasoning faculty. A rather unusal metaphor.

67. *Swinish sleep*—sleeping like hogs, making a heavy snorting sound.

68. *Drenched natures*—nature soaked with wine.

70. *Put upon*—foist.

71. *Spongy*—drenched with drink ; saturated with liquor.

72. *Our great quell*—the murder committed by us. An obsolete word.

73. *Undaunted mettle*—bold spirit ; courageous disposition. *Compose*—bring forth, produce.

74. *Received*—credited ; generally thought ; believed.

Will not the two sleepy chamberlains be taken as the murderers, if we use their daggers to do the deed and besmear their bodies with blood ?

77. *Who dares*—who would dare. Note her determination.

78. *Make our grief*—show our sorrow. *Clamour roar*—make loud demonstration of grief.

79-80. I have made up my mind and strained every faculty of my body to this terrible enterprise. *Binds up*—strains. *Corporal agent*—bodily faculty, every nerve and sinew of my body.

81. *Away*—let us go away. *Mock the time*—deceive (the people) of our time ; the people around us. *Fairest show*—fair appearance or countenance.

82. You must put on a cheerful countenance to delude the world, a false face must be worn so that the wicked thoughts in the heart may not be suspected by the world.

ACT II

Scene I

Analysis of the Scene.

In this scene we have Banquo once more before us. It is late at night ; sleep sits heavily on Banquo's eyelids ; still, he has no desire to sleep. The encounter with the witches has left its marks on him. He prays God to restrain the wicked thoughts that haunt him in his sleep.

Macbeth now enters and Banquo is surprised to see that he is not abed as yet. He speaks about the great joy

of the king and hands over to him the precious diamond which the king had asked him to present to his 'noble hostess.' Banquo then tells him that he had dreamt of the weird sisters but Macbeth evidently is not inclined to take part in the conversation at the present moment, although he would like to discuss it fully with Banquo later. If Banquo would follow the advice of Macbeth, when the time comes, he would certainly be benefitted thereby. At this Banquo is immediately on his guard and answers Macbeth that he would be ready to follow his advice so long as his loyalty to his country and duty to his sovereign remain unsullied and if he does not lose his present honours by striving to augment it.

Macbeth retires to his chambers but is unable to sleep. He asks his servants to go to bed after informing Lady Macbeth to strike the bell when his drink is ready. Macbeth's mind still dwells on the deed. He seems to see before him a dagger in the air, the handle turned towards him. He tries to snatch it, but lo ! it evades his grasp. He looks again ; the dagger is still there leading the way to Duncan's room. There are spots of blood on the blade and the hilt. Macbeth now rallies himself with a fierce effort and realises that it is only a figment of his imagination, a hideous vision.

He now looks out of the window and sees the sleeping world hushed in silence. It is the time of night when wicked dreams haunt the minds of men, when the witches offer their rites to their goddess Hecate. The shrunken old murderer is already afoot and is moving with stealthy footsteps to the object of his design. Macbeth wishes that the firm-set earth would not hear his guilty footsteps as he goes to murder Duncan, lest the very stones should sound with his steps and break the mystic silence that suits so well the terrible crime he is about to perform. Now he hears the bell ringing and thinks that it is the knell announcing the departure of Duncan from this world.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The whole scene is charged with a hushed awe, a formless dread. It is the psychological moment before the murder of Duncan. There is a stillness over the whole

world. It is the time when the witches offer their rites to pale-faced Hecate. Now the gaunt, lean murderer creeps with Tarquin's ravishing strides to the object of his wilful attack. We feel that evil influences are everywhere abroad stealing quietly.

There is no appreciable pause in the action, though a new act commences here, but it rushes forward right to its climax. Still, we have the rising action. Macbeth has overcome his moral scruples and has yielded to the stronger will of his Lady. The plan for the murder of Duncan is complete. Thus the highest point of dramatic interest is reached in the first scene of the second Act.

It is true that action rises still, that the real climax is reached only with the murder of Banquo, but to a critical observer there is a falling off in interest after the murder of Duncan. The scene is one of profound psychological importance, and every word in it awakes an unknown awe and charges the scene with the spirit of dreary expectancy.

In this scene again Macbeth and Banquo are once more contrasted. The mystic influence of the witches now for the first time disturbs the rest of Banquo's soul. He cannot even go to sleep for fear of the visions that haunt him in his sleep. But Banquo, the noble and loyal soul he is, strongly resists the temptation in his heart. He even openly confesses to Macbeth that the weird sisters have started to rob him of his night's rest, but Macbeth is very close and denies all further thought about them.

Notes and Explanations

1. *How goes the night* ?—what hour of the night is it ? What is the time now ? The question is evidently intended to inform the audience what time it is.

2. *Is down*—has set.

3. *And . . . . twelve*—and the moon sets at twelve this night according to the calendar. *I take't . . . . sir*—I suppose it sets later, sir.

4. *Hold*—stop ; wait. *Husbandry*—economy. The heavens are practising economy like a thrifty housekeeper who does not allow candles to burn so late at night. In

Modern English the meaning of the word 'husbandry' has changed a good deal—it now denotes occupation of a tiller of the soil. Note the construction of 'husbanding one's resources.'

5. *Candles*—stars. *Out*—extinguished.

6. *A heavy . . . . me*—an irresistible inclination to sleep is overpowering me. *Summons*—calls to sleep.

Even the bold, honest Banquo is disturbed by the prediction of the witches and we need not be surprised if Macbeth, weak and wavering, falls a prey to their evil designs. *Would not*—do not desire to.

7. *Merciful powers*—powers of good ; spirits of virtue.

8. *Restrain*—check ; prevent. *Cursed*—wicked. *Nature*—the natural limitations or weakness of man. *Repose*—rest ; sleep. *Gives way*—yields to.

8-9. Banquo prays to be freed from the evil thoughts which arise in his mind the moment he sinks in repose.

11. *Not yet at rest*—not yet gone to rest.

13. *He . . . . pleasure*—he has been in an exceedingly happy mood.

14. *Largess*—liberal presents ; money bestowed on servants by great persons on occasions of rejoicing. *Offices*—servants ; literally the part of the castle set apart for the use of the servants ; the servants' hall.

15. *Withal*—with.

16-17. *Shut up . . . . content*—Different explanations are offered :—

(1) Wrapped up in great happiness. *Measureless content*—complete contentment which gives him happiness.

(2) He has retired to bed in perfect satisfaction.

(3) 'Summed up all he had to say, in expressing his measureless content.'

(4) He greets your wife like one shut up in measureless content, i.e. like one who is perfectly satisfied and happy.

17-19. *Our will . . . . . . wrought*. *Will*—desire to be hospitable. *Else*—otherwise. *Should . . . . wrought*—would have had a free play to make the necessary arrangements.

Being unprepared, our desire to give a hearty reception is handicapped by defective arrangements, which otherwise we would have managed better.

20. *All's well*—everything is well. The entertainment of the king has been quite good.

21. *Show'd some truth*—by the partial fulfilment of the predictions.

22. *I . . . . . them*—'the guiltless man confesses his dreams, the guilty man denies further thought about the weird sisters.' Macbeth plays a studied part with Banquo and wishes to appear innocent in his eyes. *We can . . . . . serve*—we can spare all honour for the business. *That business*—the prediction of the witches.

24. *At your . . . leisure*—whenever you are good enough to spare the time.

25. *Cleave to my consent*—follow my advice; agree to my proposals. *Cleave to*—adhere to; abide by; carry out.

When 'tis—when it is time, when the time comes.

Various explanations have been suggested for the passage:

(1) If you will agree to my proposals when the time comes.

(2) One editor uses 'consent' in the sense 'opinion.' Then the meaning will be, 'If you will come to an understanding with me, when it is formed.'

(3) *Consent*—party. If you will join my party and keep to it. Macbeth evidently wants Banquo's support and co-operation and is feeling his way. He has completely forgotten the prediction of the witches, but if Banquo so desires it, he is ever ready to spare an hour to discuss the matter.

26. *So*—provided that. *None*—I lose part of my honour.

27. *Seeking . . . it*—in striving to increase the honour I already possess.

28. *Bosom franchised*—my conscience free. *Allegiance clear*—my loyalty to my sovereign unstained. *Clear*—unsullied; unstained.

29. *Shall . . . counselled*—I shall be advised. I am ready to abide by your counsel. *Good . . . while*—good rest

in the meantime.

30. *The like to you*—the same wish to you also.

31. *Bid*—ask.

34. *Toward*—directed toward. *Clutch*—grasp tightly.

35. *I have thee not*—the dagger eludes his grasp.

36. *Fatal vision*—Macbeth imagines that fate or destiny has something to do with the vision.

36-37. *Art . . . sight*—Is it not possible, fatal vision, to feel you, as it is possible to see you? *Sensible to*—perceptible by. *Feeling*—sense of touch.

38. *Of the mind*—a dagger that exists only in the mind. *A false creation*—creation of fancy or imagination, an unreal image.

39. *Proceeding*—originating out of. *Heat-opprest brain*—brain which is severely strained and excited.

40. *In form as palpable*—in appearance as solid and substantial.

42. *Marshall'st me*—lead, guide, direct me.

43. *And . . . use*—and it is such an instrument as you are that I was planning to use for the murder of Duncan.

44-45. *Mine eyes . . . rest*—Either my sense of vision is being befooled by the other senses, or it is worth all the other senses in me put together. Macbeth is unable to believe what he sees. Either his eyes are at fault because they are able to see a dagger, which the other senses cannot perceive, or else his eyes alone are reliable and the other senses are useless since they cannot see what the eyes can see.

46. *Dudgeon*—hit. *Gouts*—drops.

47. *There is no such thing*—there cannot be such a thing as I see; what I see is unreal, a mere figment of imagination.

48-49. *It is . . . eyes*—it is only this murderous enterprise that presents such visions before my eyes. *Business*—design; plan; undertaking.

49. *The one-half world*—over half the world seems to sleep. *Abuse*—disturb.

51. *Curtain'd sleep*—(1) The people sleeping under curtains.

(2) Or sleep which descends like a curtain over the weary eyes of men. *Witchcraft*—witches.

51-52. *Celebrates . . . offerings*—perform their rites to pale Hecate. Hecate is considered to be the presiding queen of the witches. She goes by various names, Diana, Sybilla, Proserpine, etc. She is known as Luna in heaven, Artomis or Diana in earth, Proserpine or Hecate in the underworld. In popular superstition the howling of dogs in the dead of night is often associated with the approach of this frightful mistress of witches. She goes about in her nightly prowlings with the souls of the dead.

52. *Wither'd murder*—murder is personified and presented as a shrunken old man. *Withered*—gauntlooking.

53. *Alarm'd*—awakened ; roused to action.

54. *Whose howls . . . watch*—who indicates the passing hours of his time of watching by howls. *Watch*—the cry of watchman indicating the hour of night. *Stealthy pace*—cautious tread.

55. *With . . . strides*—with the cautious careful steps of Tarquin as he slowly made his way to the bedroom of Lucerce to ravish her. The reference is to an old classical tale. Tarquin, a Roman noble, violates the honour of Lucerce, wife of Collatinus. The noble Roman matron after relating her dishonour before her father and husband kills herself.

This story furnished subject for his poem 'The Rape of Lucerce.' Shakespeare seems to be profoundly impressed by this incident. There is also an allusion to it in his *Cymbeline*. *His design*—the object of his crime.

56. *Firm-set earth* solid ground as opposed to images of the mind.

58. *Prate*—prattle. *Whereabout*—the place where I am gone.

59. *Take*—remove. The hour with its hushed awe and silence is in harmony with, and admirably suited for my cruel designs. *Present horror*—this present atmosphere of horror.

60. *He lives*—Duncan lives.

61. *Words to the heat . . . gives*—too many words chill

one's ardour for the deed. 'In talking about a deed one's ardour for it often cools.'

62. *I go . . . done*—I shall go on and soon it will be done.

63. *Knell*—funeral bell.

Does not Duncan hear the death-knell which would summon him either to heaven or to hell ?

SCENE II

Analysis of the Scene.

Lady Macbeth has strengthened herself for the deed by taking a draught of wine. The chamberlains are already completely confused with wine and there is no danger from that side. She lays the daggers ready for action and leaves the door leading to Duncan's room open. But with all her preparations, she is really agitated in mind and excited. The sudden shriek of an owl quite startles her.

Macbeth meanwhile has gone to the room to do the deed. Lady Macbeth, agitatedly waiting outside, imagines that he must be about it now while the king's guards are dead drunk, quite unmindful of their great responsibility. Macbeth within thinks that he has heard some sound and shouts out. Lady Macbeth hearing this for one brief moment thinks that they have been betrayed and the guards have woken up.

Macbeth now, after having done the deed, hysterically bursts into the room. He is confused, agitated, and startled. He tells his wife how he had heard two people talking in the chamber next to the king's. One laughed in his sleep, another cried 'murder'; one cried 'God bless us,' the other said 'Amen' to it ; both then settled themselves to sleep again. Macbeth wanted to say 'Amen' but the word was choked in his throat and would not come out. Lady Macbeth now asks her husband not to take the matter so seriously as he does, for it would only make one mad. But Macbeth cannot be composed. When murdering he seemed to have heard a voice cry : ' Sleep no more ; Macbeth doth murder sleep.' Lady Macbeth is unable to understand her husband, but he repeats how he seemed to hear the voice cry : " Sleep no more ! "

Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more.'

Lady Macbeth now takes command of the situation. She asks her husband to wash his hands, and return the daggers which he had unwittingly carried with him, in his agitation, back again to Duncan's room, and to smear the drunken grooms with blood. Macbeth, however, visibly shrinks before the suggestion. He cannot return to the scene of blood again. He dare not go back to the room and look on the gruesome deed he had perpetrated. Lady Macbeth now comes to the rescue of her husband, to all outside appearance firm and resolute, she hurries back with the dagger to the scene of crime.

Now a knocking is heard from within. Macbeth starts. Every little noise frightens him. He cannot bear the sight of his bloody hands. Soon Lady Macbeth returns, shows her bloodstained hands to Macbeth, and treats the whole affair lightly. The knocking is repeated. At this she asks her husband to wear his nightgown to make it appear that he has been asleep.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

In this scene we get the removal of the major obstacle with the murder of Duncan. Although we do not actually witness the murder, a realistic picture of it is presented before our eyes through the excited words of Macbeth.

The scene provides an interesting character-study. The contrast between the husband and the wife is clearly brought out once more. One important point may be noticed. Lady Macbeth is not a born fiend. She appears fiendish because she studiously represses all the milder passions in her. She has all the natural feminine horror of blood ; it is only by taking a draught of wine that she is able to compose herself. But her power of will is indeed remarkable. She is a woman who can rise equal to any emergency. Although she herself is agitated, despite the fact that she is overpowered by the nature of the deed, she calmly undertakes to return the dagger to the chamber. To the casual observer she is calm and unruffled, but inside there is the struggle, her strong will putting under stern control all her

gentler passions.

The atmosphere of vague dread which characterises the previous scene is prominent here also. The shrieking of the owl, the knocking within and Macbeth's violent reaction to his own deed raise the scene to a plane of tragedy, quite its own. In the words of Boas, the whole scene is if as it were written with a 'pen of fire.'

Notes and Explanations

1. *That which*—wine. The wine which has made the grooms drunk, has emboldened me.

2. *What*—wine. *Quench'd*—stupefied, confused ; deadened their reason. *Give me fire*—give me vigour and energy ; put new spirit in me ; has set aflame my startled courage. *Hark*—listen. *Peace*—hush ! Lady Macbeth is even at the least noise.

3. *Fatal bellman*—a town crier whose duty it is to announce the death of condemned men. He is usually sent to condemned persons on the eve of their execution to give them notice of their approaching death. Here the condemned man is Duncan.

3. *Fatal*—because the owl predicts the death of Duncan.

4. *Stern'st*—grimmest ; most terrible. The owl being a night-bird is always considered with dread by superstitious people. Here the owl is the bellman proclaiming the death of Duncan. *About it*—about the deed, committing the murder.

5. *Surfeited grooms*—grooms who have been fed to excess ; excessively drunk.

6. *Do . . . snores*—with their heavy snores seem to be mocking the charge, the high responsibility, entrusted to them—the charge of guarding the king. *Drugged*—added some drug to induce sleep and heaviness. *Posset*—evening drink. The usual posset in the Elizabethan age is milk curdled with wine or some other acid infusion.

7. *That death . . . . them*—they are so powerfully drugged that there is a struggle in them between death and vitality. It is uncertain whether they would survive the effects of the drug. *Nature*—vital powers. *Contend*—

fight ; struggle, each supremacy for getting the upper hand.

8. *Whether . . . die*—on the question whether they should live or die.

10. *Alack*—alas.

11. *'tis not done*—the murder is not committed. Lady Macbeth is startled by the hysteric shouting of her husband from the king's bedchamber. *The attempt . . . us*—to attempt the deed and not to be successful would mean ruin to us. To be discovered in the act of crime would be a complete disaster. *Confound us*—ruin us.

14. *Had done't*—would have done the deed myself. Lady Macbeth is not absolutely an inhuman monster. She has her fine sensibilities although they are hidden and concealed. She is not completely devoid of the 'milk of human kindness,' but has real womanly feelings.

14. *My husband*—See the note of relief in her words.

16. *Crickets cry*—the cry of crickets predicts death.

18. *Hark !*—Macbeth is startled again by some noise.

19. *Second chamber*—bedroom adjoining Duncan's.

21. *Sorry*—piteous spectacle ; wretched sight.

23. It is foolish to say that 'it is a wretched sight' when the deed is done and finished.

23. *There's one did laugh*—there is one who did laugh.

24. *Stood*—stood still.

25. *Adress'd them*—settled themselves to sleep again.

26. *Lodged together*—quartered in the same bedroom.

Note the short, broken, abrupt speeches. It is designed to show the high agitation of the murderer and the atmosphere charged with nervous tension.

27. *Amen*—so be it.

28. *As*—as though. *Hangman's hands*—hands of an executioner.

29. *Listening . . . fear*—listening to their fear.

30. *Consider . . . deeply*—do not take it so seriously ; do not attach any special significance to it.

32. *Most*—greatest.

33. *Stuck in my throat*—was choked within me ; I could not bring out the word.

34. *After these ways*—in this manner. Note the irony of the words. She can give advice to her husband, but cannot keep out the deed from her mind. And the natural result which she predicts overtakes her also. If it had been possible for her to dismiss the crime without any further thought from her mind, the Lady Matbeth of the sleep-walking scene would be an impossibility. She is not really so callous and inhuman as she appears to be. The horrible crime is foremost in her mind, but she resolutely subjects it to her will and appears the calm, collected, practical woman of action.

35. *Methought*—it seemed to me.

36. *Murder sleep*—destroy sleep ; destroy those asleep. *Innocent sleep*—sleep which never does any harm ; during sleep even the most cold-blooded murderer is harmless and hence sleep is innocent.

37. *Sleep . . . . care*—sleep which removes from the mind every care in it. *Ravelled*—knotted ; tangled. *Sleave*—sleave silk. *Knits up*—fastens up; ties up ; Life is compared to a sleave or a ball of silk which has become knotted and unwound. The industrious housewife ties up in an arranged manner this entangled thread, or, in other words, sleep banishes from the mind the turmoils and troubles that torment it. A beautiful metaphor.

38. *Death . . . life*—that which ends the daily activity of our life. *Sore labour's bath*—that which refreshes a man when he is extremely weary on account of hard toil, just as a bath does.

39. *Balm . . . minds*—which soothes the anguish of the mind. *Hurt mind*—mind tormented with care. *Great nature's second course*—the second course in nature's daily feast. Food is the first course and it keeps the body active. Sleep is the second course through which one's energy is sustained and preserved. *Courses*—dishes in a banquet. *Chief nourisher in life's feast*—the chief restorer of life. In life's banquet sleep is the chief dish which restores lost energy and vigour.

41. *Still . . . house*—the cry resounded in every part of the house insistently.

42-43. It is his own conscience shouting out to him that he will have no more sleep after this horrible deed.

45. *You do . . . strength*—you disgrace the noble strength of your nature by indulging in these fancies. *Unbend*—lower ; relax.

46. *So brainsickly*—so madly ; in such an incoherent and confused manner ; so hysterically.

47. *Filthy witness*—foul ; dirty, i.e. blood stains. Note the irony again. Compare with the Lady Macbeth of the sleep-walking scene. There she moans over the spot which she can never erase.

48. Lady Macbeth only now sees that Macbeth has carried away the daggers, which ought to have been left behind with him. In her agitation she had not noticed it before. But though excited she is quite alive to the necessity of prudence and caution, and with cool self-possession asks her husband to carry the dagger back to the chamber.

49. *Smear*—mark ; stain ; daub.

52. *Infirm of purpose*—weak-willed ; lacking in steadfastness of purpose.

54. *Are but as pictures*—are no more than pictures ; are mere inanimate, harmless objects although they may appear dreadful to look at.

54-55. *'tis the eye . . . devil*—only children would be frightened by the picture of a devil.

56. *Gild*—to make of a golden colour—here red colour ; smear with blood. There is a pun on the word. The word would be pronounced 'gult' when acted on the stage. *Guilt*—it would appear that they have done the murder. Pun is a very common device in Shakespeare's plays.

57. *Whence*—from what direction.

58. *How . . . me*—what is the matter with me? *Appalls*—terrifies ; frightens.

59. *Pluck out mine eyes* :

(1) They torment me as though my eyes are being pulled out.

(2) Make my eyes stare out of their sockets. Macbeth starts with horror at the sight of his own bloody hands.

60. *Neptune*—Roman sea-god. According to classical mythology, Saturn was dethroned and his kingdom was divided among his three rebellious sons. Jupiter became the ruler of the heavens, Pluto of the lower world, and Neptune of the sea.

61. *Rather*—more likely.

62. *The multitudinous seas incarnadine*—dye crimson the measureless seas. *Incarnadine*—make red.

63. *One red*—one uniform red colour.

64. *I shame*—I am ashamed.

65. *To wear a heart so white*—to wear such a timid heart ; to be a coward as you seem to be.

66. *South entry*—south entrance. *Retire we*—let us retire.

68-69. *Constancy . . . unattended*—your natural courage and firmness have deserted you for the time being.

70. *Nightgown*—dressing-gown worn at night. *Lest . . . us*—lest some occasion may necessitate our leaving the room ; lest it may be necessary for us to appear outside.

71. *Watchers*—those who have not retired.

72. *Be not lost*—be not immersed ; do not lose yourself (in such wretched thoughts.) *So poorly*—so unworthily ; like a pale-hearted coward.

73. *To know . . . myself*—This is an answer to Lady Macbeth's 'be not lost so poorly in your thoughts.' I would rather forget myself in my thoughts than be reminded of the deed. It would be best to lose complete consciousness of everything including myself than be brought back to the consciousness of my horrible deed. *To know my deed*—to be conscious of my deed ; to realise my deed. *'t were best*—it would be best.

74. May you wake up Duncan with your knocking. *Would*—wish. *Thou couldst*—you could do it. Lady Macbeth in spite of her agitation and terror has her wits

about her. She does not want her husband to worry about the deed. But her deliberate attempt to encourage her lord has more often than not given rise to the thought among some people that she is callous and inhuman. She is really not so. It is only the triumph of her will over her natural womanly passions.

SCENE III

Analysis of the Scene.

The drunken porter swaggering and reeling slowly moves to the castle gate in answer to the knocking we heard in the previous scene. His senses almost overpowered with drink, he imagines himself to be the porter of hell-gate and admits, one by one, a farmer who hanged himself expecting plenty, a thieving English tailor, and a Jesuit equivocator.

When the gate actually opens we do not find any of these, but only the attendant lords, Macduff and Lennox. They enter the castle and are met by Macbeth who has risen up early. The king had asked Macduff to wake him at an early hour and he proceeds to the royal chamber for the purpose. Macbeth and Lennox now being left alone, the latter speaks about the unruly night ; how chimneys were blown down, and how 'strange lamentings' were heard in the air ; the confusion in nature foreboding some grievous calamity for the world.

At this moment Macduff rushes out of the king's chamber crying 'Horror ! Horror ! The king has been murdered. A piteous spectale !' The entire castle is roused. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth enter with the other lords and make loud demonstrations of their grief. Being smeared with blood, and their daggers unwiped lying on their pillows, the charge of murder is naturally foisted on the two chamberlains. Macbeth, with his simulated indignant horror, dispatches the grooms with his sword, thereby making his position, as he imagined it, the more secure. Lady Macbeth now can no more stand the horror of blood ; she faints, and is carried away from the chamber by some lords.

Malcolm and Donalbain in a trice grasp the whole

situation. When the nobles decide to meet later in the day to enquire into the crime the two brothers quietly slip away having already planned to flee, one to England, and the other to Ireland.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The porter scene has been violently attacked by several critics as un-Shakespearian and spurious, and defended by a few like De Quincey and Hales with equal vehemence. Hales has established beyond doubt that the scene is Shakespeare's own. There is the true Shakespearian ring in the style and the language, it affords tone relief to the powerful strain of the previous scene, and, moreover, the whole scene is dramatically relevant and artistically an absolute necessity. We certainly cannot agree with the critics who deny this scene to Shakespeare. Cunningham's comment on this is illuminating : 'It would seem as if the supreme playwright felt the vital necessity of some adequate relief from the awful tension of the murder scene, that he acted up to this necessity and composed the scene, hurriedly perhaps, and, whilst conceding something to the groundlings, with a keen anxiety to get on with the main action of the play. Nonetheless too did the practical playwright in him feel the dramatic necessity of allowing time for Macbeth to retire, change his dress, and recover the composure !' (For a fuller discussion, see Introduction—Textual.)

Grant White says of these three scenes taken together as one : "Not only is there no change of place, but there is no introduction of new dramatic interest or incident. Of yet greater importance is it here that the apparent continuance of the action is vitally essential to the dramatic impression intended to be produced. The ringing of the bell by Lady Macbeth, the exit of Macbeth upon that prearranged summons, the entrance of the Lady to fill the stage and occupy the mind during her husband's brief absence upon his fearful errand, the sudden knocking which is heard directly after she goes out to replace rhe daggers, and which recurs until she warily hurries her husband and herself away lest they should be found watchers, the entrance of the Porter, and finally of Macduff and Lennox—all this

action is contrived with consummate skill; and its unbroken continuity in one spot, and that a part of the castle common to all its inhabitants, is absolutely necessary to complete the purpose."

It is interesting to note here the sudden change of attitude of Macbeth on the discovery of the murder. He acts his allotted part better than his wife and ceases to be the shrinking timid man of the previous scene. When it comes to a question of action, Macbeth is in his own elements; his only handicap is his violent imagination which often oppresses him during his periods of inactivity.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Here's . . . indeed*—here is indeed a loud and vigorous knocking! The person who is knocking is doing so quite energetically.

2. *Porter of hell-gate*—Note the irony of his words. The audience know much more than the porter and would understand the full significance of the words. *He should . . . key*—he would have had a lot of work to do owing to this continual locking and unlocking of the gate. Many people, as he supposes, have admitted into hell and hence the continual turning of the key. *Old turning*—continual turning; plenty of turning.

4. *Beelzebub*—Stana. The porter continues his grim jest. He fancies himself at the gates of hell and pretends to be admitting the different types of sinners, one by one.

5. *On the expectation of plenty*—owing to the bumper crop, the farmer, who had hoarded up corn, failed in his speculation and hanged himself in disappointment. If the harvest had been bad, the farmer could have sold his corn at high price and thereby made a huge profit. But the crop was excellent and there was no dearth of corn.

This is supposed to be an allusion to the very low price of corn in England in the summer of 1606. The harvest was good during the season. Again it is quite possible there is in these lines some topical allusion to the key which has been lost to us.

Come in time—you have come in time to enter hell; it is never too late for you to enter hell. For a person who

has counted on a public calamity to indulge in private profiteering the best place is hell.

This passage might be taken as an internal evidence to fix the date of composition of the play.

6. *Napkins*—handkerchiefs. *Here . . . it*—you will find the place hot enough, or you will be properly punished for your crime. You will perspire a great deal in the oppressive heat : hence the need of handkerchiefs.

8. *Other devil's name*—might be Demogorgon. The Porter does not name the devil, because the very mention of the name is commonly supposed to bring calamity. *Faith*—indeed. *Equivocator*—quibbler ; one who practises equivocation ; one who deceives people through the use of ambiguous terms.

Some critics find in this an allusion to Jesuits, who believed in and freely practised the doctrine of equivocation. One Jesuit, Henry Garnet, was accused of perjury and tried in 1606. He defended himself by means of the doctrine of equivocation. Since this trial attracted great public attention during the period, any reference to it would be immediately understood and appreciated by the Elizabethan audience.

This again might be taken as a pointer to determine the date of composition of the play. The play could not have been written before 1606. (See Introduction—Textual.)

9. *Swear . . . scale*—swear on both sides of a question, i.e. they can contradict and support their oaths according to their scales of justice ; they can swear and forswear.

10. *Treason enough*—enough offences against the state. Garnet was one of the conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot. The idea of the Jesuits was to blow up the House of Parliament. *For God's sake*—in the name of God ; they ascribe every little action of theirs to the will of God ; they pretend to be doing everything for the sake of religion.

11. *Equivocate to heaven*—the conspirator could not get to the heaven by quibbling.

13. *English tailor . . . French hose*—There is a double allusion in these lines.

(1) There is probably a reference here to the thieving

propensities of tailors in general. They would often purloin cloth entrusted to their care. Some of them are such experts in their trade that they would be clever enough to steal even from the material for a short hose. A hose is a tight-fitting breeches.

(2) Shakespeare here perhaps refers to the common Elizabethan practice of aping French fashions and manners. France was the model of all fashions during the period. Her authority was supreme in matters of dress.

15. *Roast your goose*—there is a play upon words here.

(1) *Goose*—the tailor's smoothing-iron ; the heat in hell is sufficient to heat the smoothing-iron of the tailor.

(2) Be punished adequately for your thefts ; or it may be a satirical remark 'you can ply your old trade here.'

16. *What are you?*—Who are you? *But this place . . . hell*—He is gradually getting sober and realises that the place is really too cold to be hell.

17. *I'll . . . no further*—I will no more play the role of devil's porter at hell-gate. *Thought*—intended ; planned. *Let in*—admitted.

18. *Some . . . professions*—some men representing all the professions. *Go the primrose way*—follow the smooth pleasant path of wickedness.

19. *To the everlasting bonfire*—to the eternal torment of hell. Many people lead a gay cheerful life and end in the ever-burning hell-fire.

20. *Remember the porter*—do not forget to give the porter his usual gratuity. Wordsworth remarks: 'As I do not doubt the passage was written with earnestness, and with a wonderful knowledge of human nature, especially as put into the mouth of a drunken man, so I believe it may be read with edification.'

22. Is it because you went too late that you rise up so late?

23. *Carousing*—revelling ; feasting ; making merry. *Second cock*—the second crow of the cock, i.e. about 3 o'clock.

24. *Stirring*—going about.

28. *Timely*—in proper time ; early.

29. *Slipp'd*—missed. *Hour*—hour named by the king. *Bring*—conduct.

30. *Joyful trouble*—a trouble you will undertake with great joy or willingness. An example of oxymoron.

31. *'tis one*—it is a trouble.

32 *The labour . . . pain*—When our labour is a pleasure to us there is in it that which recompenses one for the inconvenience caused. *Physics*—cure.

33. *Make . . . call*—I will take the liberty of calling.

34. *'tis my limited service*—it is my appointed service or duty.

35. *Appoint so*—settle so, decide so.

36. *Unruly*—tempestuous. Here once again we get the supernatural setting of the opening scenes. This passage is deliberately introduced to heighten the supernatural background of the play. It was a tempestuous night and there was destruction all around. Perhaps the witches riding on the air were responsible for the violent upheaval of nature. *Lay*—lodged.

38. *Lamentings . . . . . air*—moaning or wailing sounds were heard in the air. *Strange screams of death*—unnatural yells uttered by persons dying a violent death.

39. *Prophesying*—predictions. *With accent terrible*—in a tone that struck fear in the hearts of the hearers ; accents foreboding disastrous results.

40. *Dire combustion*—dreadful social disturbances ; terrible outbreak of social disorder and calamity. *Confused events*—events causing confusion and disorder.

41. *New hatch'd to*—newly born to. *The woeful time*—the sad time. All the horrors are quite consistent with the miserable time. *Obscure bird*—the moping owl. It is 'obscure' because it lives in darkness. The bird always inspires terror in superstitious minds.

42. *Clamour'd*—hooted ; shrieked. *The livelong night*—throughout the night.

43. *Feverous*—affected with fever ; volcanic.

44. *My young remembrance*—my young memory; as far as I can remember, we never experienced such a rough night at any time in the past. One cannot bring to mind another night as stormy as this.

45. *A fellow to it*—one like it.

46-47. It is a horrible sight which the heart cannot conceive nor the tongue utter. 'Conceive' goes with heart, and 'name' with tongue. Neither tongue can name, nor heart conceive thee.

47. *What is the matter*—Both Macbeth and Lennox ask the question together. Macbeth plays his self-assigned part very well indeed.

48. *Confusion*—destruction. *Now*—with the murder of Duncan. *Made his masterpiece*—has now achieved its crowning enormity.

49. *Sacrilegious*—unholy. *Broken ope*—broken into.

50. *The Lord's anointed temple*—the sacred person of the king. The word has its origin from the practice of anointing Christian kings with holy oil at the time of coronation. Evidently in these lines Shakespeare is paying a compliment to the then reigning king, James I. James himself was a firm believer in the Divine Right of Kings and considered himself the immediate representative of God on the earth.

The expression is the result of a mixed metaphor. The king is 'the Lord anointed,' and man is 'the temple of the living God'—both the metaphors are Biblical.

Stole—stolen. *Thence*—from there.

51. *Life of the building*—the spirit or soul which dwelt in the temple, i.e. his body. The king's body is a temple from which life has been stolen away.

51. *What is't you say*—what is that you say? Do you mean to say that the life has been stolen?

53-54. *And destroy . . . . . Gorgon*—go to the king's chamber and destroy your sight faculty by seeing this terrible spectacle. Gorgon is a fabulous monster described in ancient Greek legends. It is so hideous that the person looking upon it would either be struck blind, or turned to

stone. It is suggested that the reference here is to Medusa, the queen of Gorgon.

56. *Alarum bell*—bell rung in danger to wake up the household.

58. *Downy sleep*—soft, placid sleep, 'down' is the soft feathery fluff of birds, used generally for pillows. *Death's counterfeit*—the image of death ; the exact replica of death ; sleep which resembles death.

60. *The great doom's image*—awful picture of the final destruction of the world, and image of the Day of Judgment.

61. *As*—as if. *Graves*—rise up from your sleep as on the Day of Judgment the dead will rise up from their graves. Come as spectres from your beds. Macbeth is excited beyond control and his imagination is feverish. *Sprites*—spirits ; ghosts.

62. *Countenance*—be in keeping with.

63. *Business*—matter.

64. *Hideous trumpet*—a trumpet call so shockingly loud. *Trumpet*—alarm-bell. *Calls to parley*—calls to conference. '*Parley*'—a military term denoting a temporary respite in fighting for the purposes of conference.

67. *Repetition*—mere reciting. *Would murder*—(1) would be an act of murder ; would be a cruel act ; (2) would be enough to murder or kill a lady.

70. *What, in our house ?*—Lady Macbeth does not rise equal to her task and nearly betrays herself. Note Banquo's curt rejoinder. Banquo is at once suspicious. *Too cruel anywhere*—the act is a very cruel one wherever it is done.

71. *Contradict thyself*—unsay what you have just said ; say what you have reported is not true.

73. *Chance*—mishap ; terrible event.

74. *I had lived . . . time*—I would have lived a happy life.

75. *There is . . . mortality*—there is nothing attractive in man's life. Life is not worth living after the cruel murder of so noble a personage.

76. *All is but toys*—everything in life is a trifle ; things

which we prize are of no value whatever. *Toys*—trifles, gauds. *Renown and grace is dead*—(1) All that is most worthy of renown, all that is most full of grace, would cease to exist with the murder of Duncan ; (2) Duncan who was so famous and so full of grace is dead. Abstract for concrete.

77-78. *The wine . . . . of*—Duncan is compared to some rare wine. The wine has been drawn away and only the sediment is left behind. The sediment here signifies Duncan's 'dead body' and the 'wine,' his noble virtue. *Drawn*—drawn off. *Less*—sediments. *Vault*—the earth which is vaulted by the sky ; the world. *Brag of*—boast idly about. The wine has been consumed and there is only the sediment left in the earth. So also the spirit of Duncan has departed and there is only his body for the world to boast about.

79. *Amiss*—wrong.

80-81. *The spring . . . stopped*—the spring or fountain from which you had your origin is stopped up, i.e. your father is dead. The same idea is repeated in several words. *Stopped*—cut off.

83. *As it seemed*—as it appeared.

84. *Badged*—marked ; smeared.

87. *Distracted*—frenzied with terror.

89. *Yet*—still.

89-90. I repent my sudden fit of anger which made me kill them.

90. *Wherefore*—why. Macduff is suspicious.

91. *Wise and amazed*—thoughful and bewildered. *Temperate and furious*—angry and at the same time act with self-restraint.

92. *Loyal and neutral*—loyal and unprejudiced ; impartial. *In a moment* - at the same time.

93. *Expedition*—impetuosity, haste. *Outrun . . . . .. reason*—my strong love for Duncan was so impetuous that it outran reason which bade it stop. Although prudent reason restrained me, still I was rushed headlong into this act of fury, because of my sincere love for the king. *Pauser*—that

which bids one stop before acting. His hasty and violent love outstripped his reason.

95. *Silver-skin*—silver-white. *Laced*—decorated as with a lace; here streaked. The blood which had flowed from Duncan's wounds and spread over his white skin looked gold lace-work against a background of silvercloth.

96. *Gashed stabs*—gaping wounds. *Breach in nature*—an opening in his body.

96-97. *Gashed stabs . . . . entrance*—the gaping wounds seemed to be the opening through which death entered his body to carry out its work of destruction. Turner gives a wider interpretation to the term; "There is always this tendency in Shakespeare to generalise, and apply the effects on the individual to a comparison with the whole of the universe or nature. So the deep stabs or gashes on Duncan seemed to be more than wounds on a single man; they were actually wounds in nature herself, or broken parts of the great wall of life through which the forces of destruction might enter."

98. *Steeped . . . . trade*—steeped in Duncan's blood. There are red blood marks on them; a colour quite consistent with the nature of the profession. In the Elizabethan period tradesmen wore distinctive uniforms. Red would be quite an appropriate colour for the professional murderers.

99. *Unmannerly . . . . gore*—indecently stained with blood. *Unmannerly*—in an outrageous fashion. *Breech'd with blood*—covered in blood as a body would be in breeches. *Refrain*—withhold.

100. *That . . . love*—who had a heart capable of loving; a heart with capacity to love.

101. *Make's love*—makes his love. *Help me hence, ho!*—Lady Macbeth turns faint (see Introduction).

102. *Hold our tongues*—keep silent.

103. *That*—who. *Claim this argument*—have more to do with the subject under discussion. Why do we keep silent when we are the persons most concerned in this matter? We have the greatest reason to indulge in loud demonstrations of grief.

104-105. *Where our fate . . . . . . seize us*—where our

destiny ambushed in some secret spot might at any moment rush on us and seize us; where sudden unexpected danger might reveal itself at any moment and have us in its clutches. Donalbain is afraid that the same fate that overtook their father might overtake them also. The treacherous people around them would invent some excuse or other to bring them to their doom. *Anger . . . hole*—a secret spot; a hidden corner. *Let's away*—let us flee.

106. *Our tears . . . brew'd*—the occasion for our weeping has not arisen as yet. *Brew'd*—made ready to be shed —the point being that Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are indulging only in shamed sorrow.

107 108. *Nor our . . . motion*—nor is it time to show our heavy sorrow through our actions. Malcolm means that the time for action has not come.

108. *Look to*—attend to.

109. *Naked frailties hid*—covered properly our scantily clad bodies. *Frailties*—frail bodies.

110. *Suffer*—suffer from being exposed to cold. *In*—through, on account of.

111. *Question*—enquire into; investigate.

112. *Know it further*—to discover more details about it.

Fears and scruples—fear of personal safety and vague suspicions. *Shake*—unsettle.

113. *In the . . . stand*—I commit myself to God. I commend myself to the Almighty. *Thence*—under his protection.

114. *Undivulg'd pretence*—hidden designs; secret purposes; foul conspiracies.

115. *Of treasonous malice*—spiteful traitors.

I commend myself to God and under His protection would contend again all secret designs and wicked traitors. The line throws light on the character of Banquo. His complete faith in God is a contrast to Macbeth who could not even say 'Amen.' Banquo's noble nature is never shaken by the prediction of the witches. (See Introduction : Characters.)

116. *Briefly*—quickly.

Manly readyness—such dress as would befit men when called to duty, i.e. armours and arms; equip ourselves for action.

117. *Contented*—all agree to the suggestion.

118. *Consort with them*—associate with them.

119. *Office*—task.

120. *Does easy* performs very easily.

I'll to—I will escape to. Verb of motion omitted.

121 122. *Our separated . . . safer*—our fortunes will be safer if we separate ourselves. We will be running greater risks by joining our fortunes.

123. *There's . . . smiles*—murderous dangers are covered up in smiles; people who smile at us may be at the same time scheming murderous plans in their hearts.

124. *The near . . . bloody*—the closer a person is bound with ties of relationship, the more likely he will be to harbour bloodthirsty intentions.

124. *This murderous shaft*—this conspiracy to seize the throne. *Shaft*—arrow. *Shot*—sent; aimed; discharged.

125. *Hath not lighted*—has not fallen to the ground. The murder of the king is only the beginning of his career of crime. Darker things are sure to follow. Macbeth's conspiracy is compared to an arrow which has just been discharged and which has not reached the ground yet. The sure way to avoid the danger would be to keep out of the path of the arrow's flight. The arrow of Macbeth's ambition and consequent bloody deed is discharged at the throne of Scotland.

126. *To horse*—let us take to horse; let us gallop away.

127. *Dainty of leave-taking*—scrupulous or punctilious about taking leave.

128. *Shift away*—manage to get away. *Warrant in* Excuse for. *Theft*- thief.

129. *Which steals itself*—who stealthily flies away.

There is an excuse for our stealing away from the country, for by staying here we would only court death by treachery. We cannot expect any kindness in Scotland and,

therefore, there is every justification for hurried flight from this place where there may be hidden daggers in the smiles of those around us.

SCENE IV

Analysis of the Scene.

In the morning after the murder of Duncan, Ross meets an old man outside Macbeth's castle. The conversation naturally turns on the last tempestuous night. The old man has never seen such a terrifying night within his experience of seventy odd years. Ross then remarks how the heavens seemed to be displeased with man's wickedness. The sky is overcast. According to the hour indicated by the clock, day has dawned, but darkness envelopes the whole landscape and completely obscures the sun. The sun has not been seen for several days and there seems to be a violent upheaval of nature. The old man has seen a falcon being pursued and killed by a 'mousing owl.' Ross narrates how the horses of Duncan had run wild and attacked their keeper. Everything in the world seems to be unnatural and strange.

Now they are joined by Macduff. Ross asks Macduff whether any light has been thrown on the murder of Duncan. The latter replies how the chamberlains were supposed to have done the deed, being suborned for the purpose by Malcolm and Donalbain; and how they both have fled from Scotland thereby standing self-accused. Ross, however, cannot understand the story. He could not understand what motive could have prompted the two princes to the deed. Macduff further informs him how the king's body had been carried to Colme-kiln and buried in the vault of his ancestors.

Ross has heard that Macbeth is going to Scone to be crowned king and decides to attend the ceremony himself. He invites Macduff, but the latter refuses, and takes leave hoping that Ross would enjoy the coronation ceremony at Scone.

Critical Comments on the Scene

The conversation between Ross and the Old Man does not in any way promote the action of the play or contribute

to the development of its plot. It seems a mere tag. This has made several critics criticise, condemn and reject this scene as quite altogether unworthy of Shakespeare. But in this connection we have to remember that *Macbeth* is mainly a tragedy of atmosphere, and if we grant this, it is quite easy to realise how the scene adds to the effects of the play. The threatening sky, the volcanic earth, the pall of darkness that surrounds the world, the owl pursuing the falcon, and the horses eating one another up—all these heighten the effect of the supernatural in the play.

The scene may even be defended on the ground that it is an artistic necessity. Now for the first time since the action began to move, we get breathing time; we get the opportunity to look back for a while and take stock of the situation. After being hurried away through scene after scene and coming to grips with various complex and conflicting emotions, we need relief, and this is exactly what this scene affords. Again we see how the murder is regarded by persons, who are in no way directly concerned with the action in the drama. The Old Man serves in the play the purpose of the chorus in Greek tragedies, giving us the natural reaction of the average Scotchman against the murder of Duncan.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Threescore and ten*—seventy years. Old men are usually very fond of impressing others with their age and experience.

2. *Volume*—space; course; limits.

3. *Hours . . . strange*—terrible times and strange happenings or events. *Sore*—dreadful; awful; woeful.

4. *Hath trifled former knowings*—has made as trifles in comparison to all previous experience in this line, i.e. by comparison has reduced to a mere trifle my former experience of things. *Former knowings*—former knowledge; previous experience.

5. *Heavens*—the sky. *Troubled with*—displeased with; angered by.

6. *Threaten . . . stage*—threatens to destroy the earth which is the stage on which man commits his foul murders.

By the clock—according to the clock.

7. *Strangles*—smothers, stiles, prevents from shining by covering it with darkness. *The travelling lamp*—the sun which travels across the heavens.

8. *Is 't . . . predominance*—is it because the influence of the night predominates or prevails over the day? *Or the day's shame*—or is it because the day is ashamed to shed her light.

9. *Entomb*—envelop; cover; shroud. Is it that night has completely subdued the day, or is it because the day is ashamed to make her appearance that the entire landscape is covered with the pall of darkness, when there should be cheering light to greet it?

10. *Living*—life-giving. *Kiss*—greet; salute. *Unnatural*—abnormal, something out of the ordinary; contrary to what is normal.

11. *Even like the deed that's done*—even as the deed that is done is abnormal. *Deed*—the murder of Duncan.

12. *Falcon*—a bird of prey. *Towering*—soaring high up in the air. *Pride of place* two interpretations are possible:

(1) Proud of her high rank among birds.

(2) At the highest point to which she soars. In this case 'place' means 'pitch'—a term in falconry, denoting the highest point of the bird's flight. 'Towering' then would mean 'circling aloft in the air.'

13. *Mousing owl*—mouse-hunting owl. *Hawked*—attacked.

14. *Certain*—true.

15. *Beauteous*—beautiful. *The minions of their race*—the best of their breed; choicest specimens of the breed. Minion literally means 'darling' or 'favourite,'—horses highly esteemed by everyone.

16. *Turn'd . . . nature*—went mad owing to a change in their very nature. *Stalls*—compartments for animals in a stable. *Flying out*—lashed out.

17. *Contending . . . . obedience*—refusing to obey the voices of their masters. *As*—as if; as though.

Make war . . . mankind—as if they would rebel against the power of man. *Eat*—ate. Obsolete form.

20. *Look'd upon't*—I happened to look on that amazing spectacle.

21. *How goes the world*—What is the news ? *See you not*—do you not see for yourself ; can you not form conclusions from your own observations ?

22. *More than bloody* :

(1) The murder of Duncan is not only a bloody deed, but also an act of treachery.

(2) Extremely bloody ; most bloody deed.

23. *Those*—the grooms.

24. *Pretend*—aim at. What good do they expect to gain by this cruel deed ? *Suborn'd*—incited to do the crime.

26. *Are stol'n away*—have stealthily fled.

27. *'gainst nature still*—even this suspicion that Donalbain and Malcolm would have induced the grooms to do the deed is against all human instincts ; is against human nature.

28. *Thriftless*—reckless, ruinous. *Ravin up*—devour ; swallow up.

29. *Thine . . . means*—the source of your own life ; the root of your existence.

30. *Sovereignty*—royal power ; the throne of Scotland.

31. *Named*—nominated ; selected as king. *Scone*—a town in Perthshire.

32. *Invested*—crowned. Literally, clothed in royal robes.

33. *Colme-kiln*—the island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. *Storehouse*—burial-ground. *Guardian*—custodian. The island of Iona guards the tombs of many Scottish kings.

35-36. Note the omission of the verb of 'motion'.

36. *Thither*—go thither, i.e. to Scone.

37. *Well . . . there.*

(1) May you enjoy things there.

(2) May you see things done properly there.

38. *Lest . . . new*—lest our present clothes might prove more unsatisfactory than the old ones, i.e. lest we find the new regime more dangerous than the old one.

40. *Benison*—blessings.

41. *Good . . . foes*—those who would transform evil into good and convert foes into friends.

ACT III

Scene I

Analysis of the Scene.

Macbeth has been crowned king at Scone. Banquo has suspicions as to the way in which his ambition has been realised ; but like several of the other lords, he accepts the conditions for the time being. The singular predictions of the witches in the case of Macbeth and their unexpected fulfilment make him wonder whether after all his own descendants may not become kings after the prophetic utterances of the supernatural. The new king and queen now enter the stage, receive him with effusive warmth and cordiality and bid him to be present as their chief guest at the banquet to be held that night. Banquo accepts the invitation with thanks. Macbeth, all the while, has been planning murderous schemes in his mind for Banquo, and in the course of their talk ascertains from him that Banquo is riding out that night with his son and may return only after nightfall. He determines to have him out of his way and decides to make the final arrangements for the purpose.

The attendant lords are now dismissed and he asks his servant to bring those outside, awaiting his leisure, before him. Meanwhile Macbeth reviews his position. He cannot have any peace of mind until Banquo is removed. He is afraid of his royal nature and his spirit seems to be chastised in his presence. The predictions of the witches regarding Banquo and his children have also stirred in him certain vague fears.

No, Banquo's issues must not inherit the throne of Scotland! He has not steeped himself in blood and disturbed the peace of his soul so that Banquo's children might be profited thereby. Rather than, he would defy fate and make its predictions go false.

Now the murderers are presented. He had already had a talk with them on the matter, when he had pointed out to them how Banquo was the immediate cause of their present abject condition. He further incites their spirit by fitting words. The murderers express their willingness to do the deed. At this Macbeth points out how it would be an act of revenge for them and how thereby they would be winning his favour. He himself hates Banquo and wants to have him removed quietly. The deed, however, must be done thoroughly so that there might not be even the least possibility of suspicion. Fleance, who accompanies his father, must also be cut down. He, then, dismisses them, asking them to meet him an hour later, when he would be giving them final instructions regarding the matter at hand.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

A curious point of dramatic criticism has been raised regarding the character of Banquo. One cannot deny that the mind of Banquo in this scene has been seriously disturbed by the predictions of the witches. Critics, however, differ in their opinions as to the extent of the damage. To some, the short soliloquy of Banquo in this scene is more the result of idle curiosity. He cannot have, according to them, entertained any serious desire for the crown. Bradley, on the other hand, notices at this point a sudden decline in Banquo's character. When next we see him, on the last day of his life, we find that he has yielded to evil. The w tches and his own ambition have conquered him. He alone of the lords knew of the prophecies, but he has said nothing of them. He has acquiesced in Macbeth's succession, and in the official theory that Duncan's son had suborned the chamberlains to murder him. Doubtless, unlike Macduff, he was present at Scone to see the new king invested. He has, not formally but in effect, 'cloven to' Macbeth's 'consent'; he is knit to him by 'a most indissoluble tie'; his

advice in council has been 'most grave and prosperous'; he is to be the 'chief guest' at that night's supper. We cannot favour Bradley's line of thought for various reasons. For one thing, it is impossible to conceive that Shakespeare, who in several parts of the play pays compliments to the reigning king, would make his ancestor a traitor. Banquo dismisses his thoughts with "hush! no more." He is really afraid of the trend of his imagination and tries to dismiss it. Bradley's explanation that the words are said on hearing the trumpets announcing the entrance of the king and queen is possible, but is quite inconsistent with the character of Banquo as far as we have seen it, and Shakespeare's own purposes. (See Introduction—Character.)

In this scene we see Macbeth in his new surroundings with the coveted crown of Scotland in his possession. But the realisation of his ambition does not bring him the expected peace of mind; it only starts him on a downhill career of crime and bloodshed. The more successful he becomes from the worldly point of view, the deeper he sinks in blood, and we see evil and crime on the progressive. At one point in the story Macbeth appears almost mean, i.e. when he incites the murderers to the "taking off" of Banquo. The fact denotes that Macbeth's ruin is almost complete. He becomes callous, cold-blooded, and indifferent to human suffering. No more does he hesitate to sacrifice human lives at the altar of his ambition. He has become a settled and hardened criminal.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Thou hast it now*—now you have the crown.

2. *Weird*—unearthly. *I fear*—I am afraid.

3. *Thou . . . it*—that you adopted the most unscrupulous methods to procure the fulfilment of the prediction of the Third Witch. *Yet*—although you have attained the crown.

4. *It should . . . . posterity*—it would not be inherited by your descendants; it would not remain with your offspring.

5. *Root and father*—the first ancestor.

6. *Them*—witches. *There come truth*—if the words

prove true.

7. *Their speeches shine*—the speeches shine with the brightness of truth, i.e. the words of the witches have been fulfilled most conspicuously.

8. *Verities*—truth. *Made good*—proved ; established ; fulfilled. *My oracles*—prophetic utterances. Since these predictions have come true in your case, I may also, likewise, expect the fufilment of the prophetic utterances made regarding me. (See Critical Comments on this scene.)

10. *Set . . . . hope*—give me encouragement to hope. *Hush!*—Macbeth checks his thoughts. Note Bradley's interpretation of this word.

12. *Had been*—would have been. *Gap*—a striking omission. If he had been forgotten it would have been a glaring omission and in every way improper.

13. *All-thing*—in every way ; altogether unbecoming ; unseemly ; improper.

14. *Solemn supper*—ceremonious supper.

15-16. *Let . . . . me*—Your majesty may command my presence. *Command upon me*—issue a command on me.

16. *To the which*—to which, i.e. your command. *Indissoluble tie*—a tie that cannot be unfastened.

18. *Knit*—tied ; bound ; joined.

21. *Else*—otherwise, i.e. if you had not arranged to ride out in the afternoon.

22. *Still*—always. *Grave and prosperous*—important and advantageous. *Grave*—serious ; weighty.

23. *Take to-morrow*—We will receive your advice to-morrow.

25-26. *As . . . . supper*—I shall ride as far as can be covered between this hour and supper.

26. *Go not . . . . better*—if my horse does not go fast. *Better*—faster than usual.

27-28. *I must . . . twain*—I may have to borrow a dark hour or two from the night. *Twain*—two.

30. *Bloody-cousins*—murderous cousins who have committed murder. *Are bestowed*—are quartered ; have taken

refuge in.

32. *Patricide*—the crime of murdering one's father.

33. *Strange invention*—wild stories invented by them ; strange lies. *But . . . to morrow*—but we shall talk about that to-morrow.

34. *Therewithal*—together with that ; in addition to that. *Cause of state*—questions concerning the state; affairs of state.

35. *Craving us jointly*—requiring our just deliberation. *Hie*—hasten. Note the careless disinterested manner of Macbeth and the way in which he extracts information regarding the movements of Banquo.

37. *Our time . . . upon's*—our time calls upon our attention ; it is time for us to start.

38. *Horses swift*—horses to be swift.

39. *Commend*—commit ; entrust.

41. *Bemaster . . time*—spend his time in his own way; have his time at his own disposal.

42-43. *To make . . . welcome*—to make the meeting more pleasant and happy.

44. *While then*—till then.

45. *Attend*—await. Do those men await my pleasure ? *Sirrah*—ordinarily used when addressing one's inferiors.

46. *Without*—outside.

47. *To be thus*—to be a king, as I am. Macbeth means that his kingship is insecure. *Is nothing*—holds no attraction.

48. *Safely thus*—to be a king without any fear of being dethroned would be something.

50. *Stick deep*—are deep rooted. *Royalty of Nature*—Royal bearing. Shakespeare is referring to the high and noble qualities of Banquo, the traditional ancestor of King James and is evidently trying to win court favour.

51. *Reigns*—remains ; exists. *That . . . . fear'd*—something that one ought to fear. *'tis . . . . dares*—he ventures a good deal.

52. *To*—in addition to. *Dauntles . . . . mind*—fearless disposition of his nature ; irrepressible courage.

53. *Wisdom*—discretion ; prudence.

54. *To act in safety*—which enables him to face dangers with caution—without being foolhardy.

55. *Being*—life ; existence.

56. *Genius*—Guardian angel. Macbeth alludes to the classical belief that every man has a guiding spirit, or guardian angel, who is responsible for all his actions. Being capable of treachery and double-dealing himself, Macbeth suspects even the innocent nature of Banquo. *Rebuked*—snubbed ; confounded.

57. *Mark Antony*—Marcus Antonius, the Roman Consul. He became the most powerful man in Rome after the assassination of Julius Caesar. *Caesar*—Caius Julius Caesar Octavianus Augustus, the first Roman emperor and the nephew of Julius Caesar. After the defeat of Antony in the naval battle of Actium he became the Roman Emperor.

Octavius was a political rival of Antony. Antony consulted an Egyptian fortune-teller and was told that his genius was not so strong as that of Caesar's. The soothsayer says, "Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side. Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is noble, courageous, high, unmatchable, where Caesar's is not ; near him, thy angel becomes a fear, as being o'erpowered."

The passage seems to be based on 'The Life of Antony' in North's Plutarch. This line may be taken as an indication as to the probable date of composition of the play. Shakespeare wrote *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1607. This reference to the details in *Antony and Cleopatra* shows that the two plays must have been written at about the same time.

Like Antony, Macbeth also is afraid of Banquo whom he considers his political rival and an aspirant for the crown. He further feels snubbed before the royal bearing of Banquo.

57. *Chid*—rebuked ; reproved.

58. *Prophet-like*—like prophets seeing into the future.

60. *Father*—ancestor. *Line of kings*—a royal dynasty. *Fruitless*—not bearing any fruit ; a crown that will not be inherited by my offspring. *Barren sceptre*—same idea is repeated. *Barren*—empty ; not bearing any significance. *Gripe*—grasp.

62. *Wrench'd*—seized or taken away by force ; snatched away. *With*—by. *Unlineal hand*—person not belonging to my line ; the hand of a person who is not descended from me.

65. *For*—the benefit of. *Fil'd*—defiled.

67. *Rancour*—malice, bitterness, hatred. Embittered or poisoned the peace of my mind.

68. *Eternal jewel*—immortal soul. Macbeth's ruin is not complete. *Still*—in spite of his crimes, he has some religious faith.

69. *Common . . . . man* - Satan.

70. *The seed of Banquo*—the children of Banquo.

71. *List*—a place enclosed with lists ; tournament ground. Macbeth challenges Fate to a single combat. He openly defies the powers of fate.

72. *Champion me*—challenge me ; oppose me. *Utterance*—utmost degree, i.e. fight to the death.

74. *So please*—may it please.

76. *Considered of*—deliberated on ; discussed.

78. *So under fortune*—in such a low position ; so far behind your deserts.

79. *Made good*—established ; proved.

80. *In*—during. *Pass'd in probation*—spent in proving this to you. *Probation*—proof.

81. *Borne in hand*—carried in hand ; taken in ; deceived. *Crossed*—opposed ; thwarted. *Instruments*—means.

82. *Who . . . them*—who carried out or executed the plans against you. *All things else*—everything else ; every other detail.

83. *To half a soul*—half a spirit ; the most insipid and dull person. *Notion crazed*—a person whose brain s cracked ; a man not in his proper mind.

84. *Went further*—told you about the past and hinted a remedy thereto.

86. *Our point*—our subject; the matter we have to discuss.

87. *Patience*—endurance; capacity to suffer. *Predominant*—prominent. *Let this go*—let this go unavenged.

88. *So gospelled* so brought to follow the gospel; such true followers of the gospel. *Gospel*—here the Christ's doctrines.

90. *Bow'd you to grave*—brought you to the grave.

91. *Beggar'd you*—reduced you to beggary or poverty.

We notice one trait in Macbeth's character here, which we have not noticed up till now. There is a meanness in Macbeth's methods which is quite inconsistent with his character as far as it is revealed to us; but it is quite possible considering the steady decline of it, scene after scene. The petty and slanderous method employed by him here is quite unworthy of the brave general we see at the commencement of the drama.

92. *In the catalogue*—in the list. *Hounds*—hunting dogs. *Mongrels*—dogs of a mixed breed. *Curs*—low-bred dogs.

94. *Shoughs*—shaggy-haired dogs. *Water rugs*—rough-haired water dogs. *Demi-wolves*—half wolves; a cross-breed between the dog and the wolf. *Clept*—called.

95. *The valued-file*—the catalogue indicative of their respective worth.

96. *Subtler*—clever; cunning. *House-keeper*—watch-dog.

98. *Gift*—special quality. *Bounteous nature*—generous nature.

99. *In him closed*—has enclosed in him; bestowed on him.

100. *Particular addition*—a distinctive title denoting his special trait.

101. *Writes . . . alike*—class them all under the same head. *And so of men*—and so it is of men.

102. *A station*—a position; a special place.

103. *Not in the manhood*—not in the lowest rank of manhood.

104. *And I . . . bosoms*—and I will confide that matter to you.

105. *Whose execution*—the carrying out of which. *Takes off*—removes your enemy.

106. *Grapples . . . us*—binds you to me and my love.

107-108. Whose health is sickly now, but which would become perfect at the death of Banquo. The language is deliberately made obscure and ellyptical. Macbeth does not want to open his heart entirely to the murderers.

Macbeth's fortune is impaired owing to the existence of Banquo. But with Banquo's death it would be made perfect, i.e. all his ambitions would then be realised.

109. *Vile blows . . . world*—the cruel knocks of Fate; reverses of the world. *Vile*—wicked. *Buffet*—originally, a blow with the flat hand, later extending the meaning of the word, any kind of blow.

110. *Incensed*—angered. *Reckless*—indifferent to consequences.

111. *To spite the world*—to avenge myself on the world. *And I*—and I am.

112. *Tugged with fortune*—tossed about by the reverses of fortune; so distracted in my mind or pulled hither and thither by ill-fortune.

113. *Set my life*—hazard my life. *Set*—stake, gamble.

114. *Any chance*—any occasion; opportunity.

115. *Mend . . . it*—either to improve my position in life or lose my life altogether.

116. *So is he mine*—so is he my enemy. *In such bloody distance*—such a close and deadly enemy; a mortal enemy who is very near to me.

117. *Every . . . being*—every minute of his existence here on earth.

117-118. *Thrusts . . . of life*—(1) stabs me in what is most near or vital to my life.

(2) He is a thrust or danger to the interests which

are close to my heart ; a menace to the vital interests of my life.

119. *Barefaced*—open ; unconcealed. *Sweep him*—remove him.

120. *And . . . it*—and make my royal will the justification for the act. *Avouch*—justify. *Yet . . . not*—still, I cannot do it.

122. *May not drop*—must not lose ; cannot afford to lose. *Wail*—bewail ; lament.

123. *Thence*—therefore ; for that reason.

124. *To your . . . love*—it is only on that account that I woo your assistance, i.e. seek your help.

125. *Masking*—hiding ; concealing. *Common eye*—from the eye of the world.

126. *Sundry*—several ; various. *Weighty*—important.

128. *Your spirits . . . you*—your enthusiasm for the deed shines on your face ; your bold and willing spirit expresses itself through your eyes. *At most*—at the latest.

129. *Plant*—post ; station.

130. *Perfect spy . . . time*—may be interpreted in different ways :

(1) I shall obtain the information from the best-informed spy as to the time you may expect Banquo. Here 'with' means 'by'; 'through.'

(2) 'Spy' may mean 'what is spied' ; 'the result of spying.' Then the meaning would be 'I shall let you know everything that has been ascertained by the spying of his movements, and the most opportune time for the murder.'

(3) I shall let you know everything that has been observed regarding the time of his movements.

(4) One editor takes 'time' in the sense 'circumstance.' I shall let you know the result of accurate observation of all the circumstances concerning him.

131. *On it*—of it. The time to do the deed.

132. *Something*—somewhat away from. *Always thought*—it must be remembered always.

133. *That . . . clearness*—that I must stand clear of

suspicion.

134. *Rubs*—imperfections. *Botches*—blemishes ; clumsy work.

136. *No less material*—no less important ; as necessary.

138. *Embrace*—share. *Resolve*—consider ; think on the matter before arriving at a decision.

139. *Resolved*—determined.

140. *Call upon*—send for you. *Straight*—straightaway, presently. *Abide*—remain.

141. *Concluded*—finished ; settled.

Scene II

Analysis of the Scene.

The new king and queen are in no way satisfied with their present position. They seem to be surrounded on every side by suspicion and fear and both feel discontented with this 'doubtful joy.' Lady Macbeth asks her husband not to brood over his own gloomy thoughts, because there is no use of thinking about a thing, unless there is some remedy for it. Macbeth replies that they have only wounded a terrible snake, and that at any time, it may, out of malice, strike at them with its deadly tooth. He would not any more eat his meal in uneasiness and be tormented with terrible dreams during night. Rather would he bring the whole world to its destruction ; make both heaven and earth fall into pieces.

Lady Macbeth now asks her husband to smooth down his excitement and wear a look of jovial welcome before his guests that night at supper. Macbeth agrees to this and asks her to lavish special attention on Banquo. He cannot feel security and safety as long as Banquo is alive. His mind is full of scorpions. Lady Macbeth at this suggests that even in him life is not permanent and eternal. But this prompting is unnecessary ; Macbeth does not require any more help in his schemes of bloodshed ; he hints that he has already planned one for Banquo. Lady Macbeth hears the news with indifferent interest. Macbeth, on the other hand, anxiously awaits the approach of night when in his

own words 'a deed of dreadful note' will be committed.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

Once again, in this scene we get the opportunity of examining the attitude of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth towards each other. Now we see Lady Macbeth for the first time after the tragedy, when she had been carried away unconscious. Like her husband she is also in a state of mental turmoil. By slow and imperceptible degrees, and quite unknown to herself also, she is gradually drifting away from her husband. Macbeth now spares her the revolting details of Banquo's murder; neither is she very enthusiastic about them. If she had been a callous inhuman monster revelling in crime, she would not have kept aloof from such schemes, but would have with relish joined them. But here throughout, Lady Mecbeth's attitude is one of weary indifference.

Retribution overtakes both. The 'horrible imaginings' of Macbeth and the 'compunctious visitings of nature' against which she cannot wholly fortify herself, in Lady Macbeth, rob them of their night's rest. Already Macbeth's poisoned chalice is presented to his lips. He even envies the fate of gracious Duncan, who peacefully sleeps in his grave without in any way being disturbed by 'life's fitful fever.' But in neither of them has this retribution taken the form of conscience as yet.

Lady Macbeth does not regret what she has done, but the discovery that Macbeth is unhappy makes her wretched and miserable. She strenuously strives to hide this emotion from her husband and attempts to cheer him up. For the first time she realises that the murder of Duncan has not made her husband happy, and that she has only led him astray from the path of virtue and made him wade in the sea of blood.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Is Banquo . . .court*—Lady Macbeth fastens upon Banquo as the greatest danger and has her misgivings about him.

3. *Would attend*—would await. *His leisure*—his convenience.

4. *Naught . . . spent*—nothing has been achieved while everything has been lost.

5. *Where . . . content*—where the object of our desire is realised without any contentment.

7. *Dwell in doubtful joy*—happiness that is not secure; happiness of which you yourself are not sure.

From these lines some critics come to the conclusion that Lady Macbeth is experiencing remorse. Far from it, she does not regret what she has done, out of sympathy for the gracious Duncan. Her remorse is that Macbeth as yet is not happy, that their success is as yet insecure, and that she had led her husband into crime without achieving anything by it. Given the same circumstances, she would most certainly hatch the same plot again, if she is convinced that it would make her husband happy.

8. *Why . . . alone*—why do you keep to yourself?

9. *Sorriest fancies*—saddest, most wretched imaginings. Why do you make your companions gloomy by your own gloomy thoughts?

10. *Using*—brooding on.

11. *Them*—those murdered; Duncan and his two chamberlains.

12. *Should . . . regard*—should not be regarded, considered, or thought of. Things which cannot be cured must be banished from the mind altogether.

Note Lady Macbeth's anxiety for her husband. Herself torn by conflicting passions, disturbed and weary, she throws all her power to raise the spirits of her depressed husband. In his presence, and before his misery, she forgets her own troubles.

13. *Scotch'd*—injured; wounded slightly.

14. *Close*—heal up. *Whilst our poor malice*—our feeble efforts to injure the snake. *Malice*—power to work harm.

15. *Her former tooth*—the poisonous fang which she formerly possessed. We have only wounded the snake and not killed it. It would soon heal up and at any time would turn back and strike us with double fury.

16. *The frame of things*—the structure of the world.

Disjoint—be disjointed ; go to pieces. *Both the worlds suffer*—both heaven and earth perish.

17. *Ere . . . fear*—before we eat our meal in fear, i.e. rather than eat our meal in fear.

18. *In the affliction*—in the torment.

19. *Shake us*—make us shiver. *Nightly*—every night. *Better be*—it would be better to be.

20. *Sent to peace*—sent to restful sleep. Euphemism for 'killed.'

23. *Torture of the mind*—torment of the mind, i.e. mind disturbed by fear and suspicion.

24. *In restful ecstasy*—continuous state of torment. *Restless*—continuous. *Ecstasy*—In Modern English, it means 'extreme pleasure'. Literally it means an extreme state of any emotion ; here, 'extreme agony.'

The metaphor is from the rack, a medieval instrument of torture. Macbeth is stretched and tortured on the rack of his own mind.

23. *Life's fitful fever*—the feverish agitation of life ; the trouble and turmoil of life. *He sleeps well*—he sleeps in peace ; undisturbed sleep.

24. *Treason . . . worst*—treachery has done its worst, i.e. treachery could do no further harm to him. *Steel*—sword.

25. *Malice domestic*—civil war ; internal agitation. *Foreign levy*—invasion by foreign forces.

26. *Touch him*—harm him. *Further*—any more. *Come on*—compose yourself.

27. *Gentle my lord*—be gentle, be calm, my lord. Do not excite yourself. *Sleek . . . looks*—smooth down your haggard look. *Rugged*—frowning ; haggard.

28. *Bright*—cheerful. *Jovial*—pleasant. *Remembrancer*—reminder. *Apply*—devote itself to.

Let your special attention devote itself to Banquo, i.e. treat Banquo with special consideration.

31. *Present him eminence*—pay homage to him as the most distinguished guest, the honour ; treat him with marked favour. *Both . . . tongue*—both through the look of welcome you wear and your words.

32. *Unsafe . . . while*—being unsafe for the present. *Lave our honours*—wash our honours. *Flattering streams*—streams of flattery ; words of flattery.

34. *Vizards*—masks ; visors. *To our hearts*—to the thoughts in our hearts.

Being unsafe as we are at present, we must hide the thoughts in our hearts under the mask of our jovial nature and cheerful spirit. We must, further, wash our honours in streams of flattery to keep them fresh, i.e. free from suspicion. 'They must wash this kingly state in streams of flattery lest it be soiled by rebellion or treason.'

36. *Scorpions*—thoughts that sting me like scorpions. My mind is full of terrible thoughts which sting me like scorpions.

38. *But in them . . . eterne*—but their life is not eternal ; they are not going to live for ever. Different explanations have been given to 'nature's copy' :

(1) The lease of nature of life—a legal metaphor.

(2) Human form created after the image of God.

Eterne—permanent ; everlasting ; eternal.

39. *There's . . . yet*—there is cause for consolation yet. *Assailable*—vulnerable.

41. *Jocund*—merry. *Cloister'd flight*—flight round the cloisters of the castle. Cloister is a covered walk often round a quadrangle. *Hecate*—The goddess of night and witchcraft.

42. *Shard-borne beetle*—beetle with its black horny wing-case. *Shard-borne*—carried by shards ; which keeps itself in the air with the help of its shards. *Drowsy hum*—dull and monotonous ; hence sleep-inducing.

43. *Hath . . . peal*—has tolled the call which makes all living things yawn with drowsiness, i.e. the signal which summons all living beings to slumber, is sounded.

44. *Dreadful note*—dreadful notoriety.

45. *Be innocent . . . knowledge*—be ignorant of the knowledge. *Chuck*—an epithet of endearment.

46. *Till . . . deed*—till the time comes to congratulate me on the deed. *Seeling night*—night which closes the eyes

of the day or night which sends everything to sleep. *Seeling*—The word is borrowed from falconry. 'Seeling' is closing the eyelids of falcons till they become tame. *Scarf up*—cover up, as with a scarf ; blindfold.

48. *The bloody*—the hand of night is bloody because bloody deeds are mostly committed during night.

49. *Cancel*—invalidate. *Great bond*—may be explained in several ways :

(1) The bond or tie by which Banquo is tied to the world.

(2) The bond of tenure by which Banquo holds his lease of life. A legal expression.

(3) *Bond*—decree, by which Banquo's offspring would inherit the crown of Scotland.

50. *Pale*—pale with fear. *Light thickens*—daylight grows dim ; darkness approaches. *Makes wing to*—flies away to.

51. *Rooky wood*—wood where the rooks have built their nests.

52. *Good things of day*—the good and honest creatures among the living. *Droop and drowse*—are tired and feel drowsy.

53. *Night's black agents*—the creatures who engage themselves in wicked deeds at night. *Rouse*—rise ; make their way.

54. *Marvell'st*—wonder. *Hold thee still*—be patient.

55. *Things bad . . . ill*—things which have originated out of evil would be strengthened further by deed of crime. *Make strong themselves*—make themselves strong.

56. *Go with me*—go with me in this ; agree to my plan.

Scene III

Analysis of the Scene.

The two murderers have met in the park outside the palace and are soon joined by a third. The last streaks of daylight are fading away in the west ; it is time when the belated traveller hurries to his inn. Banquo also must be approaching by now. The murderers hear the sound of

galloping horses. Banquo and Fleance approach, dismount at the gate, procure a light, and walk up the road leading to the palace. The treacherous murderers now set up on them, put out the light, and inflict twenty mortal wounds on Banquo. Banquo shouts to his son to flee and Fleance escapes the clutches of the murderers.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

Much has been discussed as to the identity of the Third Murderer in this scene. Some identify him with the 'perfect spy o' the time' whom Macbeth employs in the last scene. Some others take him as the Attendant of Macbeth who appears in the previous scene, and who, they allege, has been taken into the confidence of Macbeth. Some say that the Third Murderer is Macbeth himself, who has come to see the work done in person. Still some others identify him as Ross. But these are all wild conjectures and do not deserve any serious consideration.

This scene marks the turn of Macbeth's wheel of fortune. Till now, he had been progressing from success to success ; now this marks a definite stage, and from now onwards, we note a steady reverse of fortune and the hero being hurled down from rock to rock down to his final ruin. With the escape of Fleance his star is no more on the ascendant ; his plans miscarry ; his schemes fail ; the supernatural, which had been favouring him up to now, pits itself against him.

This scene again is of the type which would appeal to the Elizabethan audience. The cruel murder of Banquo and the flight of Fleance, when acted on the stage would be highly thrilling and picturesque. The Elizabethan audience had a real fascination for horror and Shakespeare, who had always his hand on the pulse of the nation, caters to its needs by the introduction of Banquo's murder on the stage.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Join with us*—an archaic form meaning 'join.'

2. *He need . . . mistrust*—he does not deserve our mistrust, i.e. we need not suspect him.

3. *Delivers . . . offices*—since he informs us as to our

duties. *Delivers*—informs, communicates. *Offices*—duties.

4. *To the . . . just*—exactly according to the instruction received from Macbeth.

5. *West*—western sky. *Glimmers*—shines faintly. *Streaks of day*—streams of daylight.

6. *Spurs*—hastens, rides fast. *Lated*—belated. *Apace*—quickly.

7. *Timely inn*—to reach the inn in time.

8. *Subject . . . watch*—the object of our watch ; the person for whom we are on the lookout—Banquo.

9. *'tis*—it must be.

10. *Within the note of expectation*—those in the list of guests who are expected.

11. *His horses go about*—his horses go by the main road, a more circuitous route.

13. *From hence*—from here.

14. *Make it their walk*—prefer to cover the distance by foot.

15. *Stand to't*—keep firm ; do not fail.

16. *Let it come down*—(1) let the rain come down.

(2) Or the rain may be the shower of blows which falls on Banquo.

18. *Thou mayest revenge*—you may revenge my death. *Slave*—knave ; traitor.

19. *Strike out*—put out. *The way*—proper thing to do.

20. *One down*—one brought down ; one killed.

21. *Best half of our affair*—The most important half of our enterprise.

22. *Say*—report.

SCENE IV

Analysis of the Scene.

The guests have assembled in the state-room of Macbeth's castle for the royal banquet. Macbeth bids his guests occupy their seats, moves about with easy affability, and expresses an apology for Lady Macbeth, who is not yet ready to receive them. Now the First Murderer appears

at the door and Macbeth hurries to him. He is relieved at the success of the enterprise, but his gloomy forebodings visit him again when he hears of the escape of Fleance. But Fleance is as yet only a boy, and there is no danger from that side for the present.

Macbeth returns to the reception room, expresses his apology to the guests, and remarks on the absence of Banquo. The lords show him the seat specially reserved for him, and he is about to approach it when he sees the ghost of Banquo already there and shaking his 'gory locks' at him. This completely terrifies Macbeth and he gives vent to utterances of horror. The guests, however, are unable to understand the cause of Macbeth's agitation. Lady Macbeth explains to them this wild behaviour of her husband ; how Macbeth was occasionally subject to such fits ever since his childhood, and asks them to take no notice of it since it would only infuriate her husband all the more. Meanwhile the ghost of Banquo vanishes, and being reminded of his duty as host by Lady Macbeth, Macbeth hastens to the company with excuses, and proposes to drink their health.

But the ghost of Banquo does not allow him his peace even at the banquet. It appears a second time and sends Macbeth into fits of terror. He is almost on the point of betraying himself. Lady Macbeth, now realising the danger of keeping the company, dismisses the guests with profound regrets. They depart hoping that the king would soon be well again.

When the ghost vanishes a second time Macbeth regains some of his natural courage. He tells Lady Macbeth how Macbeth had openly defied him by refusing to attend the feast. He would seek the witches the next morning and know the worst that is in store for him. Lady Macbeth seeing the excited condition of her husband now presses him to go to sleep and take rest.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The ghost scene is not remarkable for its tragic intensity, but it sustains the interest of the audience throughout. The mind of Macbeth is steadily weakening ; he is no more able to banish his visions by bracing himself for the occasion.

In this scene the appearance of the ghost suggests that the powers of evil are still at work and Macbeth is being drifted slowly to the rock where he is sure to perish.

Lady Macbeth appears in this scene with all the calm self-possession we have noted in her from the very beginning. But we get the feeling that she is weary, that the events of life are sorely trying her nerves, that her final breakdown is not far off. She reminds Macbeth of his guests with a weary sigh ; none of the vehemence and sudden outbursts of passion, we have noticed in her previously, appear now ; we have the feeling that her frail body is worn down by her vigorous mind.

In this connection the question has been asked often and again whether Macbeth's ghost is real or a mere hallucination. Shakespeare deliberately leaves the point an open question. But whether the ghost be real or otherwise, the full dramatic effect is achieved and that is all that matters.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Your degrees*—your ranks according to which you should sit at the table.

1-2. *At first and last*—from the beginning to the end ; in the first place and in the last place ; once for all.

3. *Society*—company ; guests assembled.

4. *Play . .. host*—play the part of the host whose duty it is to attend on guests with all humility.

5. *Keeps her state*—remains on her chair of state. *In best time*—in good time ; at the proper time.

6. *Require her welcome*—request her to bid you welcome at the proper time.

7. *Pronounce it for me*—bid welcome on my behalf.

8. *My heart speaks*—although I do not speak any words, my heart gives them welcome.

9. *Encounter thee*—acknowledge your welcome. *Heart's* -hearty.

10. *Both sides are even* :

(1) Both the sides of the banquet table are equally filled with guests.

(2) May refer to welcome. The words of welcome and their acknowledgment are equally balanced. The words of welcome have been repaid by a just proportion of hearty thanks.

11. *Be large in mirth*—be unrestrained in your mirth : enjoy yourself fully. *Anon*—soon ; presently. *Drink a measure*—drink health.

12. *The table round*—all round the table.

14. The passage may be explained in two ways :

(1) *Without*—outside. This blood is better on your face than within the body of Banquo.

(2) It is better that you should be outside than Banquo be within the banquet hall.

15. *Despatch'd*—murdered. Euphemism.

17. *Cut-throats*—murderers.

18. *That did the like*—who did the same.

19. *The nonpareil*—without a match ; unequalled.

20. *Is escaped*—has escaped.

21. *Fit*—sudden seizure of some malady: here apprehension or fear. *Else*—otherwise.

22. *Whole*—sound ; solid. *Founded*—firmly planted.

23. *As broad . . . air*—as unrestrained and free as the surrounding air. *Broad*—moving free ; without restraint or check. *General*—pervading everywhere. *Casing air*—air which encases us or envlopes us.

24. *Cabin'd*—shut up within the limits of a cabin. *Cribb'd*—confined as in a crib. A crib is a child's bed. All the phrases express practically the same idea.

25. *Saucy*—impudent. *Safe*—safely removed.

26. *Bides*—remains ; lies.

27. *Trenched gashes*—open wounds as deep as trenches or ditches ; deep-cut wounds.

28. *The least . . . nature*—the least harmless of those wounds would cause death to anyone.

29. *There*—in the ditch. *Worm*—the young serpent ; Fleance.

30. *Hath nature*—has that in his nature, i.e. character. *Breed venom*—produce poison.

31. *Teeth*—fangs.

32. *We'll . . . again*—we will hear ourselves talk further on this matter.

33. *Give the cheer*—give cheerful welcome. Lady Macbeth meets her husband at the door and reminds him of his duties to his guests. *The feast is sold*—the feast would be like one for which one has paid.

34. *Vouch'd*—asserted ; warranted. *A making*—proceeding. Dyce explains : 'That feast can only be considered as sold, not given, during which the entertainers omit such courtesies as may assure their guests that it is given with welcome.' A feast where the host does not often in the course of its progress assure that the guests are heartily welcome would be no better than one obtained on payment.

35. *To feed . . . home*—if one's idea is merely to satisfy his hunger, the best thing would be to dine at home.

36. *From thence*—away from home ; when one sups at a friend's. *Sauce*—that which gives enjoyment. *Meat*—food. *Ceremony*—ceremonial courtesy.

37. *Meeting were bare without it*—a party without ceremony would be dull and monotonous.

35—37. If the aim is merely to satisfy the hunger one might as well dine at home. While dining outside the chief enjoyment of the meal depends on the ceremony that accompanies it. A party without this formality and courtesy would be dull and uninteresting and devoid of any enjoyment. *Remembrancer*—one who reminds.

38. *Good digestion . . . appetite*—may you have good appetite for the dishes and strong digestive powers to digest what you eat.

39. *Health on both*—may you have good health after both, i.e. after you have dined here and digested your meal.

40. *Had we now*—would have had now. *Our country's honour*—all those who are an honour to our country. *Roofed*—assembled under this roof.

41. *Graced*—gracious ; noble.

40-41. Here we would have assembled in this castle all the noble persons who are an honour to our country, if only noble Banquo were present.

42. *Challenge for unkindness*—charge with or accuse of unkindness.

43. *Mischance*—accident. I rather have to charge him with unkindness than pity him for the accident which has prevented him from attending our banquet.

44. *Lays blame . . . promise*—attaches blame to his promise, i.e. shows that he is to be blamed for not keeping his promise.

45. *Grace*—favour. Would it please your majesty to favour us with your royal company.

46 *The table's full*—all the seats are filled up.

48. *Moves*—agitates.

51. *Gory locks*—blood-stained hair.

54. *And youth*—and had been so, i.e. subject to such fits from his youth. *Keep seat*—remain in your seats.

55. *Momentary*—lasting only for a moment ; will soon pass away. *Upon a thought*—in an instant ; presently.

56. *Note him*—pay special attention to him.

57. *Extend*—increase.

58. *Feed*—continue eating. *Regard him not*—do not observe him.

Note the calm, collected attitude of Lady Macbeth in this embarrassing situation. Not for a moment does she lose her self-control. This fit is as sudden on her as on the assembled company, but she does not show any surprise whatever and takes the whole thing as a matter of course. Lady Macbeth is a great woman and in spite of her complicity in crime she excites our wonder and claims our respect.

60. *Appal*—frighten. *Proper*—fine ; said ironically. *Stuff*—nonsense.

61. *Very painting . . . fear*—merely a picture presented by your fear.

62. *Air-drawn*—a dagger drawn or wielded by the air ; unreal.

63. *Flaws*—sudden gusts of feeling.

64. *Imposters . . . fear*—affected pretence of fear ; false fear.

65. *At a winter's fire*—when seated around a fire in the winter season.

66. *Authorised*—told under the authority of. *Grandma*—grandmother. You are only pretending fear. This affectation would well suit a story narrated by an old woman at a winter's fire. When the old woman gives the story, which she had received from her grandmother, the assembled company would make a pretence of being afraid.

67. *Faces*—grimace. *When all's done*—when the whole thing is considered ; after all.

69. *Prithee*—I pray you. *How say you*—what do you say to that now ?

70. *If thou . . . too* if you can make gestures, you should also be able to speak.

71. *Charnel-houses*—vaults for depositing dead bodies. *Back*—to be taken with 'send' in line 70. 'Send back.'

73. *The maws of kites*—stomachs of kites.

71—73. If graves and vaults start giving us the buried, let the stomachs of the birds of prey serve as graves for the dead. We should give up the practice of burying and let kite-hawks devour dead bodies.

'Monument' literally means the stone erected over the grave. Here it is used to denote the grave itself.

73. *Unmanned by folly*—robbed of manly courage by idle fancies.

74. *If I stand here*—as surely as I am standing here.

75. *Blood has been shed*—murder has been committed.

76. *Ere . . . weal*—before the laws of men removed from society everything evil and made it gentle. *Human statute.* (1) Human laws, i.e. laws pertaining to man. (2) Human laws—laws which raise compassion and pity, i.e. laws which cherish everything mild and gentle.

77. *Since too*—even after the advent of such laws.

78. *Too . . . ear*—too gruesome to be heard. *The times have been*—there was a time.

79. *When . . . out*—when the brains were dashed out.

80. *And there an end*—there would be an end of the matter.

81. *Mortal murders*—deadly wounds. *Crown*—heads. Macbeth is describing the approach of the ghost of Banquo.

82. *Push . . . stools*—keep us away from our chairs.

82-83. The walking about of the ghost of Banquo is even stranger than the murder with twenty mortal wounds.

84. *Do lack you*—do miss your company.

85. *Muse*—wonder.

86. *Infirmity*—weakness; disease. *Nothing*—of no importance; will not be heeded by.

88. *Fill full*—fill to the brim.

89. *Table*—persons seated at the table.

91. *Would . . . here*—I wish he were here. *We thirst*—I drink.

92. *And all to all*—and I wish all good wishes to every-one.

93. *Pledge*—promise to be loyal to you. *Avaunt!*—Begone! *Let . . . thee*—let the earth cover you up.

94. *Marrowless*—without marrow. 'Marrow' is the soft fatty substance in the cavities of bones.

95. *Speculation.* (1) Power of sight. (2) Light of intelligence that would be seen in the eyes of the living.

96. *Glare*—look fixedly without intelligence.

97. *Peers*—nobles.

97. *A thing of custom*—a thing which is quite usual with him. *No other*—nothing else.

98. *Of the time*—of our feast.

100. *Rugged*—shaggy. Russia is a country where bears are abundant.

101. *The arm'd rhinoceros*—(1) Rhinoceros, which is armed with a powerful horn. (2) Rhinoceros, which is

encased in the armour of a thick tough skin. *Hyrcan tiger*—Hyrcanian tiger. Hyrcanian was a province of ancient Persia on the south of the Caspian Sea. The province was famous in Shakespeare's day for tigers.

102. *Firm*—steady.

104. *Dame me to the desert*—challenge me to meet you in some unfrequented place.

105. *If trembling I inhabit then*—(1) Inhabit—give a habitation. If trembling, then, inhabit me or is found in me, if I give a living place for fear in me. (2) Inhabit—stay at home. If through trembling, i.e. on account of fear, I keep within doors. (3) Inhabit—wear as a habit or dress. If then I put on the dress of fear. *Protest me*—declare me to be.

106. *The baby of a girl*—(1) The baby girl. (2) The doll of a girl. (3) The child of a very young girl which naturally would be very puny and weak. *Hence*—go hence; depart. *Horrible shadow*—terrifying shape.

107. *Unreal mockery*—unreal vision.

108. *I am a man again*—I have regained my natural valour.

109. *Displaced*—disturbed; spoilt. *Broke*—broken. *Good meeting*—happy company.

110. *Admired*—admirable; complete. *Be*—happen.

111. *Overcome us*—surprise us.

112. *Without*—without exciting.

112-113. *You make me . . . owe*—You make me feel that I am a stranger even to the natural temperament I possess. Your cool self-possession makes me doubt whether I am really as brave as I suppose myself to be. Macbeth means that her attitude makes him doubt his impression about himself that he is a brave soldier. *Disposition*—temperament. *Owe*—possess.

116. *Natural ruby*—the bloom; rosy colour.

117. *Blanch'd*—made pale.

118. *Enrages*—excites.

119. *Stand not*—insist not.

120. *Better health*—my better health.

122. *It*—the ghost.

123. *Stones . . . speak.* (1) This is supposed by some editors to be an allusion to the stones of judgment, with which the Druids used to test blood-guilt. An innocent person could easily move the stone ; but the guilty would not have the strength to move it. (2) Some others think that there is here an allusion to some story where some stones heaped on a grave removed themselves thereby disclosing the bones of the murdered man buried there.

123. *Trees*—Shakespeare must have got this idea from the story of Polydorous in Virgil's Aeneid. A myrtle tree was planted on the grave of Polydorous, a Trojan prince, who was treacherously murdered. The boughs of the tree dropped blood thus revealing the murder.

124. *Augures* –(1) Auguries—divinations. (2) Augurs—fortune-tellers who claimed to discern truths by observing nature. *Understood relation*—by a proper understanding of relations between things.

125. *Magot-pies*—magpies. *Choughs*—jackdaws.

126. *The secret'st man of blood*—the murderer who has done the deed most secretly.

Macbeth is in fear of retribution and is afraid that his deed will also be discovered. Stones and trees have been known to disclose the deed of the murderer. Divination can also help to expose the most secret crime, if we can discover the relations that exist in the study of natural objects. If we can find out the secret relations between omens and events, we can bring to light even a murder committed with the greatest secrecy, by observing the movements of birds and animals. *What . . . night* ?—what time of night is it ?

127. *Almost at odds*—almost at variance. The night is passing into morning so that it is difficult to say whether it is night or morning.

128. *How . . . thou*—what do you say to that ? *Denies his presence*—refuses to attend.

129. *Greatest bidding*—royal command.

130. *By the way*—incidentally ; by chance.

132. *Feed*—paid or bribed. There is not one nobleman in whose service I do not have a servant under my pay.

133. *Betimes*—early ; soon.

134. *Bent to know*—I am determined to know.

135. *By the worst . . . the worst*—I am determined to know even by the worst means the worst that would happen to me in the future.

136. *All cause*—(1) all obstacles. (2) all moral scruples.

137. *Should I*—even if I do not.

I have waded so far in blood that even if I do not proceed any further, returning would be as tedious as going forward.

139. *That will to hand*—that will be executed.

140. *Scanned*—examined. The plans I have in my head should not be pondered over and examined critically, but should be immediately executed.

141. *Season of all nature*—that which preserves everything living ; that which refreshes all creatures.

142. *Self-abuse*—self-delusion ; abuse or trouble inflicted by one's own mind.

143. *Initiate fear*—the fear of a beginner. *Wants*—is lacking in. *Hard use*—requires to be made callous by experience.

144. *Young indeed*—novices in the practice of crime.

Scene V

Analysis of the Scene.

The witches meet Hecate, the mistress of their charms on a heath. Hecate enters with a frowning face. She is angry because the witches had completely ignored her in their trading and trafficking with Macbeth. She must, however, get an opportunity to reveal the glory of their act to Macbeth. She is further angry because all that the witches have done is only for a wayward son. They should, nevertheless, set right their mistakes. She asks them to meet her the next morning at the pit of Acheron with their magic charms, where Macbeth will go to know his destiny. This night she

would devote to some sinister and fearful purpose. Before tomorrow a great business has to be accomplished. There is upon the corner of the moon a vaporous drop which she should catch before it reaches the earth and prepare out of it some fearful charms capable of raising strange spirits before Macbeth, which will draw him to his ruin. In answer to the call of her little spirit Hecate hurries away.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

This scene has been dubbed 'Un-Shakespearian,' and rejected by several critics as spurious. Some Shakespearean students find in this scene a close resemblance to Middleton's 'The Witch.' According to Fleay, in Hecate's part there is not a line 'that is not in Middleton's worst style: her metre is a jumble of ten and eight . . . and what is of more importance, she is not of the least use in the play in any way.'

It is really strange to have a classical goddess presiding over Scottish witches; this mixture of classical myth and Nordic superstition. This is, however, quite in tune with the spirit of Shakespeare's time. There was a great interest in classical learning and Latin and Greek books were translated freely into English.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Angerly*—angrily.

2. *Reason*—reason to be so; you have given me adequate cause for being angry. *Beldams*—old, ugly women; hags.

3. *Saucy*—impudent. *Overbold*—presumptuous.

4. *Trade and traffic with Macbeth*—to have dealings with Macbeth. One editor quotes this line to show that the scene is spurious, and taking the literal meaning of the word, points out that the witches do not 'trade' with Macbeth.

5. *Riddles*—enigmatic utterances. *Affairs of death*—matters connected with death.

6. *Mistress . . . charms*—I, who preside over the magic rites, you employ.

7. *Close contriver*—secret instigator; one who secretly designs or plans. *Harm*—injury. Hecate is personally

responsible for all these wicked designs; the witches are merely the agents of execution.

8. *Bear my part*—to play my part; to do my legitimate share in the work.

10. *Which is worse*—what is worse. *Wayward son*—(1) A person determined to have his own way. Macbeth comes to the witches solely for the purpose of knowing the worst that is held out to him by Destiny. And he is determined to know his future; he will know it even if he has to use the worst means possible for the purpose.

(2) Macbeth, who is not a genuine votary of witchcraft and whose aim is only to profit thereby. He may even now at any moment escape from their clutches.

12. *Spiteful*—malicious.

14. *Make amends*—set right your former mistakes; make up for your former transgressions.

15. *Pit of Acheron*—According to classical mythology, Acheron is a river in the lower world. *Pit*- some black mysterious pool supposed to communicate with hell. Shaskespeare seldom cares to be accurate in his details.

18. *Vessels*—cauldrons. *Spells*—magic incantations; mystic combinations of words producing charms.

20. *I am for the air*—I will take a flight in the air. It was popularly believed that the witches could ride on broomsticks in the air. *Dismal*—sinister. *Fatal*—causing death. *Use*—purpose.

22. *Wrought*—done; accomplished. *Great business*—a work of great importance.

23. *Corner to the moon*—In classical magic, the magicians derived certain baneful powers from the moon, which they could use against humanity.

24. *Vaporous drop*—drop of moisture. It has been identified with Virus Lunare—moon poisons. *Profound*—(1) of great efficacy, i.e. having secret, hidden powers.

(2) Deep; thick; hanging low and ready to fall. Here it is used as an adverb.

26. *Sleights*—arts; tricks.

27. *Sprites*—spirits. *Artificial*—created by art or magic.

28. *Illusion*—deception : by their unreal appearance.

29. *Draw him on*—hasten him ; lure him.

30-31 *Bear . . . fear*—continue to nurse his foolish hopes in utter defiance of prudence, propriety, and fear.

32. *Security*—a reckless feeling of being safe.

33. *Mortals' chief enemy*—chief enemy of man.

35. *Stays*—waits.

Scene VI

Analysis of the Scene.

Lennox, exchanging confidence with another lord, speaks about Macbeth's tyranny. He makes insinuative glances at the murders of Duncan and Banquo, and the official versions that were given of them. Malcolm and Donalbain killed their father and it distressed Macbeth so much that he killed the half-dazed grooms in virtuous indignation. And it was indeed wise that he did so. Banquo went out walking late, never to return alive again. His son, Fleance fled ; perhaps the deed must have been done by him. Macbeth has managed his affairs very well indeed. If Duncan's sons would fall into the clutches of Macbeth, they would realise what it is to murder a father. So would Fleance. The lord is afraid that he has talked too much. It is only for a similar offence and his failure to be present at the tyrant's banquet, that Macduff stands exiled from Scotland.

Lennox asks the lord whether he has heard anything of Macduff. The lord gives the information that Macduff is gone to the court of the English king, Edward the Confessor, where Malcolm had already fled, to procure help for his afflicted country. Macbeth had sent for Macduff, who openly had defied him. Lennox thinks that it is well that Macduff had fled to England, and prays for the speedy arrival of the hour when his suffering country would be freed from the yoke of the accursed tyrant.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The scene reveals the growing suspicion and fear of

Macbeth in the minds of the Scottish nobles. Dramatically it serves the same purpose as the last scene in the Second Act. The tide of public opinion is against Macbeth. He has become a tyrant and the audience is sufficiently prepared for the wholesale murder of the Macduff family in the following Act.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Hit your thoughts*—(1) Happened to agree with or exactly an echo of your own inner thoughts.

(2) Have stirred your thoughts in the same way as mine have been stirred.

2. *Which . . . further*—whose meaning can be extended further.

3. *Borne*—carried out ; executed ; managed ; done. Note the insinuative glances in his words.

4. *Of*—by. *Marry*—a common oath, a corruption of Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ.

He could well afford to pity the dead man whom he had murdered. *Right-valiant*—truly valiant. 'Right' used in the sense 'extremely, properly.' *Walked out*—walked out of doors.

6. *You may say*—you may say if you care ; you are quite at liberty to say. Note the veiled sarcasm of the words.

7. *Men . . . late*—men must not stay out of doors late because there is the possibility of their being murdered.

8. *Who cannot want the thought*—can anyone help thinking ? *Monstrous*—wicked ; outrageous.

10. *Damned*—accursed. *Fact*—act ; deed.

11. *Straight*—immediately.

12. *Pious anger*—virtuous anger. *Delinquents*—culprits. *Tear*—cut into pieces.

13. *Thralls*—captives : the grooms were the slaves of heavy sleep.

14. *Wisely too*—they may otherwise compromise him.

15. *Any heart alive*—the heart of any living person. *Had he*—if he had. *Under his key* in his power ; in his

custody. *Should find*—would most assuredly realise.

20. *So should Fleance*—so would Fleance.

21. *Peace!*—he checks his own words. *Broad*—plain-spoken; frank.

22. *Failed his presence*—failed to be present. *Tyrant*—Macbeth.

23. *Lives in disgrace*—has incurred the disfavour of the king.

24. *Bestows himself*—has bestowed himself; is lodged; is residing. *The son of Duncan*—Malcolm.

25. *Hold the due of birth*—holds back his birthright: withholds what belongs to him by right of birth. *Holds*—withholds.

27. *Of*—by. *Edward*—Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred, the Unready, and the last Anglo-Saxon king of the old line. He was a pious king and was canonised by Pope Alexander III in 611. *Grace*—courtesy; kindness.

28. *Malevolence*—malice.

28-29. *Nothing . . . respect*—the low state of his fortune does not in any way rob him of the respects that belong to him as one of royal rank.

30. *Upon his aid*—to come to the aid of Malcolm.

31. *Wake*—to rouse. *Northumberland*—the Earl of Northumberland, the maternal grandfather of Malcolm; the 'Old Siward.' *Warlike Siward*—his son, young Siward.

33. *Ratify*—sanction; approve; with the help of God.

34. *Meat*—meal.

36. *Faithful homage*—faithful service. *Free honours.* (1) Dignities freely bestowed for meritorious actions.

(2) Receive honour that is unsullied from the rightful king. Honour that is free, i.e. unpolluted.

(3) Honour enjoyed fully by everyone without fear of life.

37. *All . . . now*—for all of which we pine now.

38. *Exasperate*—exasperated; angered. *Sent . . .*

Macduff—did he send a messenger to Macduff ?

40. *Absolute*—emphatic ; positive. *Sir, not I*—Sir, I am not going.

41. *Cloudy*—frowning ; describes the face of Macbeth's messenger.

42. *Hums*—murmurs. *As who should say*—as one who would say. *Rue*—repent.

43. *Clogs me*—burdens me. *That*—that incident.

44. *Advice . . . caution*—make him alive to the necessity of caution.

44-45. *To hold . . . provide*—to keep as far out of his reach as with his discretion he can manage.

46. *Some holy angel*—may some holy angel.

47. *Unfold*—deliver. *Ere he come*—before he reaches England.

48. *Swift*—speedy.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Analysis of the Scene.

The witches have assembled in a cavern and are about to prepare their loathsome charms. When they hear the proper signal from their attendant spirits they set about their concoction with great enthusiasm. The eye of a lizard the toe of a frog, the tongue of a dog, the liver of a blaspheming Jew, the nose of a Turk, the lips of a Tartar, and the fingers of a babe strangled at its birth are all thrown into the boiling cauldron and the mixture stirred into a thick sticky gruel. When the loathsome contents of the cauldron are bubbling, the witches walk round it muttering their mystic incantations. Now Hecate arrives on the scene and at her suggestion all of them dance around the cauldron in great joy. The Second Witch, because of the pricking of her thumbs, predicts that something wicked is approaching that way, and immediately after this Macbeth presents

himself before the witches.

Macbeth approaches them and demands an answer to all his questions. The First Witch at this asks him whether he would like to hear the answers from their own mouths or from the mouths of their masters. Macbeth prefers the latter and asks them to call their masters. The witches now pour the blood of a sow that has eaten her litter into the cauldron and add thereto grease collected from the hangman's gibbet. When the rite is completed, there emerges out of the vessel, the First Apparition in the form of an armed Head and it warns Macbeth against Macduff. The Second Apparition, a bloody child, declares that none of women born can harm Macbeth, urges him to be bloody, bold, and resolute, and bids him defy the power of man; the Third, a child crowned, with a tree in his hand, predicts that he will never be defeated till Birnam wood moves to Dunsinane hill. Macbeth is not satisfied; he wants to know more. His fear regarding Banquo has not been calmed as yet, and asks the question whether Banquo's issues would ever become kings of Scotland. The witches now show him a procession of eight kings. The kings pass before his eyes one by one, and as each one passes, he utters impatient exclamations. The last king, who followed, had a mirror in his hand in which could be seen many more kings. The procession closes with the 'blood-bolted' Banquo who triumphantly smiles as he passes by Macbeth. The witches then make an attempt to cheer up the depressed spirits of Macbeth with music and dance and suddenly vanish into the air.

Lennox entering at this moment announces the arrival of two or three horsemen, who have come with the news of Macduff's flight to England. The information totally upsets Macbeth and he sternly resolves that henceforward the 'firstlings of his heart' will be the 'firstlings of his hand.' He decides to seize the castle of Macduff by surprise and put to death his wife, his babes, and eyeryone who would continue his line.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

This scene also has been criticised, condemned, and

dubbed 'Un-Shakespearian' by several critics. It is crammed to the full with the common superstitious beliefs regarding witches and witchcraft of the Elizabethan age. The supernatural suggestions of this scene are different from those of the Firt Act; we get a compromise, as it were, between the popular superstitions of Shakespeare's day and the weird sisters of Scandinavian mythology.

Dramatically this scene is very important. The witches here, by strengthening Macbeth in his feeling of security, hasten him on to his doom. His retribution begins with the reappearance of the witches as his rise had begun with their first appearance. Snider says about the scene: "The turning point of the drama begins with the second appearance of the weird sisters. The theme of this second movement is retribution, not, however, the internal retribution, which brings home to the guilty man the true equivalent of his deeds."

Theatrically the scene is striking and important. The mysterious and loathsome contents of the witches' cauldron, the rise of the apparitions, the show of the eight kings, and finally the presence of the 'blood-bolted' Banquo on the stage, all these held great fascination for the average Elizabethan audience and, moreover, would add much to the picturesqueness of the scene. They increase our conviction that several mysterious, dark, evil powers are working for the destruction of Macbeth and strengthen our sense of the coming doom.

The mixture of ingredients is according to popular superstition, and is not an invention of Shakespeare's. Johnson's remarks on this scene are striking. 'The babe, whose finger is used, must be strangled at its birth; the grease must not only be human, but must have dropped from a gibbet, the gibbet of a murderer; and even the sow, whose blood is used, must have offended nature by devouring her own farrow. These are touches of judgment and genius.'

Notes and Explanations

1. *Brinded*—striped; streaked. *Cat*,—Graymalkin, the familiar name of the First Witch.

2. *Thrice and once*—four times. *Hedge pig*—hedge hogs, because of their stealthy movements and solitary habits, are usually associated with witches. *Whined*—uttered a plaintive cry. *Harpier*—the familiar spirit of the Third Witch. The name may have been suggested by 'harpy,' a fabulous monster with a woman's face and body and a vulture's wings and claws. According to classical mythology, they were ministers of divine vengeance, having the power to produce a general upheaval of nature and create destruction all around. Perhaps this resemblance to the name of the classical monster is only accidental.

4. *Cauldron*—a large boiling pot.

5. *Poison'd entrails*—the intestines of some animals that had died by poisoning.

8. *Swelter'd enom*—exuded venom like sweat. The toad was supposed to sweat poison while lying in its familiar haunt, under a cold stone.

9. *Charmed pot*—the cauldron in which the charm is prepared.

10. *Toil and trouble*—i.e. for Macbeth.

12. *Fillet of a fenny snake*—a slice from a snake which lives in fen. *Fenny*—living in the fen or marsh.

14. *Newt*—a kind of lizard usually found in stagnant water; water lizard.

16. *Adder's fork*—the forked tongue of an adder or serpent. *Blind worm's sting*—actually the blind worm has no sting. It is a harmless, non-poisonous snake, with very small eyes. It is perhaps called blind from the smallness of its eyes. *Howlet*—a small owl. The word is (H)owl-let; 'let' being a sign of the diminutive.

18. *Powerful trouble*—capable of causing great mischief.

19. *Hell-broth*—a concoction of a hellish character.

22. *Dragon*—a fabulous winged monster.

23. *Witches' mummy*—dried up corpses of witches. *Mummy*—a preparation made from human body embalmed with spice and myrrh, used for medicinal purposes. *Maw*—stomach. *Gulf*—gullet.

24. *Ravin'd* | (1) made ravenous or greedy by hunger. (2) *Ravin*—devour greedily. Hence 'glutted with food.'

25. *Hemlock*—deadly night-shade. It produces deadly poison. *Digg'd*—dug.

26. *Blaspheming Jew*—the Jews were hated in England. *Blaspheming*—talking irreverently of something holy. To Christians, it is blasphemy to deny the existence of Christ.

27. *Gall*—bile. The goat, like the cat, was often associated with the witches, and supposed to be a favourite animal of theirs. *Slips*—cuttings.

28. *Sliver'd*—torn off; plucked. The eclipse of the moon has always been considered as a bad influence, and the yew tree, perhaps, has come to be associated with evil, because tradition makes witches cut off twigs from the tree during eclipses, for the performance of their rites.

29. *Turks and Tartars*-Owing to the religious wars the people of England came to consider Turks and Tartars, as wicked, malignant and cruel. They are, further, heathens who would be eternally condemned in hell.

31. *Ditch delivered . . . . . drab*—delivered or brought forth in a ditch by an immoral woman; born of a prostitute in a ditch. *Drab*—prostitute; an immoral woman.

32. *Gruel*—broth; mixture. *Slab*—sticky; slimy.

33. *Chaudron*—entrails.

37. *Baboon*—baboons were supposed to possess mysterious powers in medieval times.

38. *Firm*—sure in its efficacy.

39. *I commend your pains*—I praise for the trouble you have taken.

40. *Gains*—profit.

42. *Elves and fairies*—the little people, supposed to inhabit the English woodlands. They possess many of the powers of the witches. They can transform themselves into any shape, are not fettered by the mortal limitations of time and space, can influence nature, but although mischievous, are never wicked. They are not powers of evil and instruments of darkness. *Ring*—circle. Fairies

generally danced in roundels.

43. *Enchanting*—bringing under the spell of enchantment or magic.

44. *Pricking of my thumbs*—another popular idea that sensation in the finger tips would signify the approach of evil.

45. *Something wicked*—something evil ; that is the witches' estimate of Macbeth.

46. The witch asks the lock to open itself and admit the person who is knocking.

48. *Secret*—mysterious : the witches perform their magic rites in great secrecy. *Midnight hags*—old women who work by night.

49. *What is't you do*—what is it that you do ? *A deed without a name*—a mysterious deed ; a deed done in great secrecy and which is never mentioned.

50. *Conjure you*—adjure you. *But that . . . . profess*—by that power which you claim to possess.

51. *Howe'er . . . . know it*—by whatever methods you manage to predict the future.

52. *Until the winds*—let lose the winds. Based on the conception that the winds were shut up in a cavern and could be released by the witches according to their pleasure. This is a very common classical conception and is mentioned both by Homer and Virgil. Homer mentions how Aeolus, keeper of the winds, gave Ulysses a bag, when he started on his voyage, in which all the unfavourable winds were tied up. *Fight*—blow violently against.

53. *Yeasty*—full of froth and foam.

54. *Confound*—break to pieces ; destroy. *Navigation*—shipping.

55. *Bladed corn*—corn sheathed in green blades. *Lodged*—laid low ; levelled to the ground.

56. *Topple*—tumble down. *Warders*—sentinels.

57. *Pyramids*—here means 'pyramid-shaped buildings,' i.e. structures with a square base slowly tapering towards the apex.

57-58. *Do . . . . . foundations*—bend down their

spire-like structures rising up in the air to the very foundations (bases).

58. *Treasure*—valuable collection.

59. *Nature's germans*—germs of life in nature ; seeds from which life springs up. *Tumble all together*—be destroyed completely.

60. *Even .... sicken*—even destruction itself grows disgusted with its work. Though all the precious, life-giving germs in nature be wholly destroyed ; though destruction itself grows weary of its work, yet, I insist that you answer my questions.

62. *Thou'dst rather*—thou wouldst rather.

65. *Pour in*—pour into the cauldron.

65. *Nine farrow*—litter of nine. *Sweaten*—sweated.

66. *Gibbet*—gallows. The gibbets in the early period were often erected along the highways.

67. *High or low*—(1) Whether you be high up in the heaven or low down under the earth. (2) Whatever your rank in the spirit-world may be.

68. *Office*—power. *Deftly*—cleverly.

69. *Unknown power*—mysterious powers known to you only and unknown to others.

70. *Naught*—nothing.

73. *Good caution*—kindly warning.

74. *Harp'd*—touched upon.

75. *He ... commanded*—he will not submit to your commands. *Potent*—powerful.

78. *Had I ... thee*—I am so anxious to hear what you say that if I had three ears I would have placed all the three at your disposal.

79. *Bloody*—blood thirsty. *Resolute*—determined. *Laugh to scorn*—hold in centempt ; defy.

81. *Live Macduff*—then let Macduff continue to live, i.e. if no man born of woman can kill me.

82. *What ... thee*—what fear need I have of thee ? I have no reason to be afraid of you.

83. *Assurance double sure*—certainty doubly sure. First Macbeth decides to let Macduff live. But immediately he changes his mind and plans to make his safety doubly certain by the removal of his enemy.

84. *Take a bond of fate*—take a pledge from fate to the effect that it will keep up its agreement. He will take a guarantee from fate that its promises will be kept.

85. *That I may . . . . lies*—so that I may tell cowardly fear that it is uttering falsehood when it threatens me with illusory dangers ; so that I may completely overcome the faint whisper of the fear within me. *Pale-hearted fear*—cowardly fear.

86. *Sleep . . . thunder*—sleep undisturbed in spite of the dangers that surround him.

87. *Issue of a king*—offspring of a king. *Round*—crown.

89. *Top of sovereignty*—(1) The head-dress of a king, which completes the claim to kingship and 'tops' all other emblems of sovereignty. (2) Figuratively the passage means 'the highest point, the summit, of man's aspirations.'

90. *Lion-mettled*—as spirited as the lion ; as fierce and ferocious as the lion. *Take no care*—pay no attention.

91. *Chafes*—shows impatience and vexation at your rule. *Frets*—shows discontentment.

92. *Vanquished*—defeated.

93. *Birnam wood*—Birnam is a hill to the north west of Perth. *Dunsinane hill*—a hill to the north-east of Perth, on the top of which could still be seen the remnants of a castle, commonly known as Macbeth's castle.

Upton explains the three apparitions : 'The armed Head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody Child is Macduff untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The Child with a crown on his head, and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bow and bear it before them to Dunsinane.' This symbolic interpretation is, no doubt, ingenious, but too far-fetched to be in any way convincing.

94. *That will never be*—that can never happen. It is something impossible even to conceive.

95. *Impress*—press into service.

96. *Bodements*—omens.

97. *Rebellion's head*—forces of rebellion. May the forces of rebellion never arise until Birnam wood rises itself against me.

98. *High-placed Macbeth*—Macbeth placed high, i.e. on the throne of Scotland.

99. *Lease of nature*—the allotted span of life ; the normal period of life granted to human beings by nature.

99-100. *Pay . . . . custom*—give up life only when old age comes as is the usual lot of mortal men. *Pay*—yield up. *Breath*—life. *Mortal custom*—the custom of mortal men ; the customary lot of men who are subjected to death.

101. *Throbs*—beats impatiently ; is anxious to.

104. *I will be satisfied*—I insist on my curiosity being satisfied. *Deny me this*—if you refuse me this.

110. *Grieve*—make sad ; vex. *So depart*—depart so, i.e. like shadow. *Show*—procession.

112. *Down*—get down.

113. *Sear*—burn ; scorch. *Hair*—the colour of the hair of the second king in the procession looks like that of the first one.

114. *Other*—second. Old English sense. *Gold bound*—encircled with a gold crown.

115. *Filthy hags*—loathsome old women.

116. *Start eyes!*—may my eyes start out of their sockets.

117. *Stretch out*—extend. *Crack of doom*—(1) Day of the world's destruction. (2) *Crack*—noise. Trumpet-call on the Day of Judgment.

120. *Many more*—many more kings.

121. *That two-fold balls . . . . carry.*

This line may be taken as an evidence to fix the date of composition of the play. The 'two-fold balls' refer to the union of the two countries, England and Scotland, in 1603. The 'treble sceptres' is supposed to be a prediction, that in

later years English kings would rule over the countries of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Evidently these lines are meant by Shakespeare to be a compliment to king James I. James I was crowned king of Scotland at Sterling in 1567, and king of England at Westminster in 1603. According to some in the 'treble sceptres' there is an allusion to the title assumed by James 'the most high and mighty prince, James, by the grace of God, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith.'

123. *Blood-bolter'd*—hair matted with thick blood; covered with blood.

124. *Points . . . . . his*—by signs expresses that these kings have descended from him.

126. *Amazedly*—in a confused, bewildered manner.

127. *Cheer we up*—let us cheer up. *Sprites*—spirits.

128. *Delights*—amusements ; diversions.

129. *I'll charm . . . . . sound*—I will by certain magic charms extract sounds of music from the air.

130. *Antic round*—an old-fashioned dance in circles.

132. *Our duties . . . . . pay*—our duty has made us pay welcome to him ; we have paid him the homage he should receive as king.

133. *Pernicious*—evil.

134. *Aye*—for ever.

135. *Without there*—waiting outside there.

137. *Came . . . you*—did they not pass by you ?

138. *Infected*—contaminated.

139. *Damned*—condemned ; cursed. Note the dramatic irony.

140. *Who was't came by*—who was it that came ?

144. *Anticipate*—forestall.

145. *The flighty . . . it*—execution can never overtake the swift-moving purpose, unless it actually accompanies it. Our plans will never be carried out unless they are done as soon as they are formed. There should not be any interval of time between the conception of a thing and the realisation

of it.

147. *Firstlings*—first thoughts.

148. *Firstlings*—first actions. Henceforward I will carry out the purposes in my heart as soon as they are conceived.

149. *To crown . . . acts*—to translate my thoughts into deeds. *Be it . . . done*—let it be no sooner conceived in the mind than carried out.

150. *Surprise*—capture suddenly by force.

151. *Give . . . sword*—put to death.

153. *That trace him in his line*—that would carry on his line of descent. *No . . . fool*—I shall not brag like a fool.

154. *Cools*—weakens.

155. *No more sights*—I have had enough and shall have no more of these horrible sights.

SCENE II

Analysis of the scene.

Lady Macduff has heard of the flight of her husband to England. She is unable to understand why he has left his wife, babes, and lands in a place where he considers himself unsafe. Ross defends his kinsman, but his attempts to convince her that this act is only the result of his wisdom and full knowledge of the times, meet her derision. Her husband is not a traitor, and by this suspicious act he will only stand self-accused. Ross, however, cannot enlighten her further, he dare not speak more openly. Being affected by the deep distress of the kindly woman, he hastily takes leave of her, crying God's blessing on her.

Now follows a homely scene of good-natured banter between Lady Macduff and her little son. Suddenly a messenger arrives and warns her of imminent danger and close at his heels follow some murderers to the castle. They ask for Macduff ; his wife and son make a spirited reply, the young boy is stabbed, but he warns his mother in time to flee. She runs away closely pursued by the murderers.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

After remaining so long in the witches' cavern, seeing apparitions and fantastic visions, this scene provides a welcome relief. As the curtain rises we find ourselves in the company of a kind, loving, homely woman, who is bound up in her own domestic cares. Political ambitions are nothing to her. Her only thought is on her home, her husband, and her children.

There is curious mixture of light comedy and intense pathos in this scene. The kindly mother indulges in the light-hearted banter only to hide the deep anguish of her heart. Her pitiful attempts to conceal her sorrow from the prying eyes of her intelligent boy touch us to the quick, but there is joy mingled with pain.

This scene reveals the further degradation of Macbeth. The 'firstlings' of his heart have become the 'firstlings' of his hand. He has descended to the level of a savage who revels in blood, and kills only on account of his savage lust to kill. It is now that he reminds us so strongly of Richard III. Like Richard III, he now becomes the plotting, callous, hard-hearted knave and displays the wanton malice of a fiend. Like Richard III, again, he wades through a series of crimes, the crime of the slaughter of innocent little ones; he becomes cruel, treacherous, and utterly incapable of good.

The flight of Macduff, as Lady Macduff insists, seems rather strange, and the act of a man who is not tied by bonds of affection to his family. The only point that we can raise in his defence is that, possibly, he could not have foreseen the sudden, savage slaughter of his whole brood. It is a phase of Macbeth's character, which he has not seen till now, and for which he is quite unprepared. Apart from this, dramatically, it has its importance; it enables one to realise the depths of hellish cruelty to which this man, once noble, once generous, and once so full of noble impulses, has descended.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Fly the land*—flee from Scotland.

2. *You . . . patient*—you must be patient; you must not judge a man hastily without knowing all the facts. *He*

had none - he had no patience ; he did not even have patience to inform me of his unseemly flight.

3. *Madness*—the act of a madman ; an act of folly ; an act, unwise and indiscreet.

3 4. *When . . . traitors*—even when our actions are not treacherous, our fears will make us out to be traitors. One will run the risk of being looked upon as a traitor, if one runs away in fear although he might not be guilty of any treacherous act.

5. *You know . . . fear*—you do not know whether his flight was occasioned by wisdom or by fear. Ross suggests that Macduff would not have fled without cause.

6. *Wisdom* !—Is it wisdom ?

7. *Titles* - his estates, possessions ; things to which he has a title or claim.

7-8. *In place . . . fly*—in a place from which he himself seeks safety in flight.

8. *He loves us not* - his actions show that he does not love us.

9. *He wants the natural touch*—he is lacking in the natural instinct, which makes every living creature protect its young ones.

10. *Diminutive*—small.

12. *All is the fear*—fear is the cause of everything. *Nothing . . . love*—his love counts for nothing.

13. *As little . . . wisdom*—the wisdom that prompted his flight is as insignificant as his love.

14. *So . . . reason* a flight which is so opposed to all rational considerations.

15. *School yourself*—compose yourself ; control your outbursts of passion.

17. *Fits o' the season*—the violent disorders and disturbances of the dreadful times we live in. (1) Ferments that suddenly arise owing to the political unrest of the country. (2) Fits means ' befits.' What befits the times—the line of action that would best suit the agitated nature of the country. *Dare not*—He does not want to disclose the

plans of Macduff for the liberation of Scotland. They are political secrets and hence cannot be divulged to a woman.

19. *And do . . . ourselves*—and do not know ourselves to be traitors ; we are not aware of any offence against the state.

19-20. *When we hold . . . fear*—when we believe every wild report that we hear, because we are in a continual state of fear, although we ourselves cannot define our fears.

21-22. *But float . . . move*—we seem to be adrift on a sea of fear, doubt, and dread, and tossed hither ond thither in it.

22. *Each way and move*—(1) In every direction and according to every movement of the sea. Here 'move' means 'movement'. (2) Theobald suggests 'wave' for 'move.' The passage then would mean 'we are tossed about by every wave in the sea.'

23. *Shall not be long*—it shall not be long ; soon.

24. *Things . . . cease*—our fortunes when they seem to be at their very worst would either altogether cease to be so or come to an end altogether. *Climb upward*—brighten up ; improve.

25. *Pretty cousin*—addressed to Macduff's son.

28. *My disgrace*—disgrace to my manhood. Ross is so overcome by powerful emotions that if he stays longer he would shed unmanly tears thus making Lady Macduff uncomfortable.

30. *Sirrah*—used in good-natured banter and is not here a term of contempt.

32. *With . . . flies*—upon worms and flies.

33. *So do they*—so do they live.

34. *Lime*—bird-lime. A sticky substance commonly used to catch birds. It is spread on a rod, and if any bird sits on it the substance holds fast to its feet and it cannot disengage itself.

35. *Pitfall*—a covered pit used usually to catch animals and not birds. *Gin*—snare.

36. *Set for*—snared. Small birds are not considered

worth snaring by bird-catchers.

37. *For all your saying*—in spite of what you say.

38. *How wilt . . . father*—how will you manage without a father.

39. *Nay . . . husband*—this sounds rather too witty from the mouth of a very young boy.

41. Then you will buy them only to sell again just as traders do.

42. *With all thy wit*—with all the wisdom that is in you. *I' faith*—truly ; indeed. *Wit enough for thee*—enough wisdom considering your age.

50. *And be all traitors*—are they all traitors ?

56. *Enow*—enough. If the liars and swearers submit themselves to be hanged, they are fools. There is a larger number of them in the world so that they can easily overpower the honest men and hang them instead.

58. *Poor monkey*—a term of endearment. *Were*—would be.

61. *Would not*—did not weep.

63. *Prattler*—one who prattles or talks in an innocent artless way. *How*—how cleverly. Lady Macduff is proud of her little son.

65. *Though in your . . . perfect*—though I am perfectly acquainted with your rank of honour. *I am perfect*—I know quite well ; I am perfectly versed in.

66. *Doubt* fear. *Does approach you nearly*—is about to befall you.

67. *Homely*—simple ; plain ; humble.

68. *Be not found*—do not allow yourself to be caught here. *Hence*—depart hence.

69. *To fright*—to alarm ; to terrify. *Methinks*—it seems to me. *Savage*—rough ; rude.

70. *Fell*—fierce. To alarm you thus, it seems to me, is really a rude behaviour on my part ; but still not to warn you of the danger very near your person, would be sheer cruelty. *To do worse to you*—may be interpreted in

two ways : (1) It will be an act of great cruelty not to warn you of the imminent danger.

(2) Giving you details of the danger would be a cruel act.

71. *Nigh*—near.

72. *Abide*—remain.

74. *Earthly world*—this world full of evil.

75. *Laudable* - praiseworthy.

76. *Accounted*—considered.

77. *Do I . . . defence*—why do I then urge such a weak defence which would be advanced only by a woman ? *Womanly*—womanish.

78. *What are these faces*—what are these grim fierce faces that I see ? *Faces*—men.

80. *Unsanctified*—unholy. *Such as thou*—such a wicked person as you are.

82. *Shag-haired*—rough-haired. The boy flares up at the insulting words cast at his father.

83. *Egg*—slang word meaning 'brat.' *Fry of treachery* —the offspring of a traitor. A slangy expression. The boy is an undeveloped traitor.

Scene III

Analysis of the Scene.

This scene takes up the story of Macduff's mission to England. The noble lord oppressed with misery gives Malcolm an account of the sufferings of his poor country and points out how evil is everywhere rampant in Scotland, under the tyrannical reign of the callous usurper. Malcolm, however, is on his guard. He has already had several messengers from the crafty king and, perhaps, Macduff also is striving to deliver him to the tyrant. Malcolm is anxious to set right the wrongs of Scotland, but expresses his suspicion of Macduff. The latter protests that he is not treacherous. Malcolm, however, being overcautious and discreet, is unable to reconcile himself with the fact that the nobleman has left his wife and children home in Scotland to the tender mercies of the cruel usurper. The passionate vehemence of

Macduff's words now almost persuade him to believe that he is honest, but he would not commit himself to anything without feeling every inch of the way before him.

The young prince decides to test the fidelity of the lord, by reproaching himself with several vices, which till now he had hidden from the eyes of the world. He can save Scotland from the clutches of the tyrant with the English king, but it will only be a transition from a milder tyranny to a most relentless one. He is one in whom all the vices of the world have taken their abode, he is lustful and avaricious, revels in every kind of foul deed, and has, moreover, none of the 'king-becoming' virtues. He asks Macduff whether such a person is fit to rule a country, and the latter, in passionate anger replies that such a person is not even fit to live. He bewails the sad lot of his miser able country. The sincerity of Macduff's grief touches Malcolm to the quick ; he is convinced of the loyalty of the noble lord and forswears all the vices he had imputed to himself a little while ago.

Now a doctor enters the stage and speaks of the mira culous healing powers of the saintly king, Edward the Confessor. Soon they are joined by Ross, who brings further news from Scotland. Macduff asks for news of his wife and children and he replies that they were at peace when he left them. He has come from Scotland to solicit the help of Malcolm to redeem his suffering country. Already there is a faction on the rise at home in Scotland, and this is the opportune moment to strike.

Macduff presses Ross for further news of his wife aud children and the latter can no more escape with evasive answers. He tells the story of the seizure of Macduff's castle and the ruthless slaughter of his wife and children. Macduff presses his hat lower on the forehead to hide his grief. The prince at this asks him not to receive the sad news with such silence, for it would break the heart ; the deed of Macbeth be the whetstone on which they would sharpen their swords when the time comes.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

This scene marks the pause before the storm. During

the brief lull in the action, the iniquities of Macbeth are enumerated to us, one by one, and the feeling is created in us that the doom is not far off, and Macduff is going to be the agent of this grand nemesis. The misery and oppression of Scotland needs must be avenged and the date is not distant when a new day of happiness and sunshine would dawn on Scotland.

In this scene we renew our acquaintance of Malcolm and Macduff; it heightens our estimation of Malcolm, whom we see now not as the overcautious, unmartial youth of the previous scenes, but as a noble king, bold, discreet, and venturesome. The scene further reveals Macduff's intense patriotism; his loyalty towards his country and his sovereign. Both the characters, however, are but slightly sketched, and are deliberately subordinated to the main one.

Much has been said on the length of this scene. This is an objectionable feature according to some critics; they point out how the dialogue is throughout dull and wooden. Prof. Dowden defends this scene. 'A long scene is needed here to give time for the cup of Macbeth's iniquities to be fulfilled, and for the counter-stroke to gather momentum; and low tension at this point is a positive merit. Our objection is that the dialogue is dull and forced. Malcolm's suspicions are natural, but his device is almost absurd.'

The lines about the King's Evil do not in any way contribute to the story and is a mere tag introduced by Shakespeare as a compliment to King James I.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Desolate shade* – some lonely and shady spot. *Desolate*—lonely; isolated. *Shade* – shady place.

2. *Weep . . . . empty*—shed tears which would wash away the sorrows that oppress our hearts; weep so that our hearts are emptied of its grief; in other words, let us find relief from our sorrow by shedding tears.

3. *Mortal sword*—sword which deals death. *Good men*—brave men.

4. *Bestride . . birthdom*—stand over our fallen country and defend it.

Instead of weeping, let us, like brave men, hold our deadly swords firm in our grasp, and stand up in defence of our downtrodden country. *Bestride*—stand astride over an enemy or friend. The metaphor is of a soldier standing over a wounded comrade and protecting him against odds. *Down fall'n*—struck down to the ground. *Birthdom*—birthright; here Scotland.

5. *Howl*—indulge in loud demonstrations of grief; lament for their murdered husbands.

6. *Strike . . . face*—cry aloud to heaven; the wails of sorrow strike against the sky and rebound to the earth. *Resounds*—echoes.

7. *Felt with*—pitied Scotland for its misery.

8. *Like syllable of dolour. Dolour*—woe; sorrow. *Like*—similar. The heavens seem to yell out similar cries of woe. *Wail*—lament.

9. *What know believe*—I believe only things about which I am sure. *Redress*—remedy.

10. *As*—according as. *The time to friend*—when the time is a friend, i.e. when I find a convenient time. *I will*—I will redress.

Whatever is possible for me to set right, I will do, when the time for it is opportune.

11. *Spoke*—spoken. *Perchance*—perhaps; probably. *Sole*—very, mere.

12. *Blisters our tongue*—scorches our tongue.

13. *Was . . . honest*—was at one time considered honest.

14. *Touch'd you*—harmed you; injured you. *I am young*—I am young and hence insignificant; of no importance whatever.

15. *Though me*—by betraying me. *And wisdom*—and it would be wisdom.

16. *Offer up*—give up; sacrifice. *Weak . . . lamb*—Malcolm himself.

17. *Appease*—pacify; soothe; quiet. *Angry god*—Macbeth.

18. *I am not treacherous*—any other person in the place

of Macduff would have tried to defend himself against the attack. But Macduff does not do so. He simply and firmly expresses the fact that he is not treacherous.

18. *But Macbeth is*—but Macbeth is treacherous.

19. *Recoil*—swerve from the right path, *In an imperial charge*—under a royal command.

Even a person who is good and virtuous may swerve from the path of goodness under the pressure of royal command. Note how Malcolm feels his way step by step.

According to some the passage refers to Macbeth. His was a noble and virtuous nature, but it swerved from the path of virtue under the royal charge imposed on him by Duncan. But this interpretation cannot be accepted because it is highly improbable that Malcolm would pay a compliment to Macbeth by referring to the noble nature which he once possessed especially considering the fact that in the final Act he refers to him as a 'butcher.'

Malcolm means that in the ordinary course Macduff may not be treacherous, but circumstances and close association with Macbeth might make him a traitor.

20. *I . . . pardon*—I must apologise to you.

21. *Thoughts*—suspicions. *Transpose*—alter; change.

His suspicions alone cannot in any way alter his essential character. The fact that Malcolm suspects him cannot take away from him his good and noble qualities, if he really possesses them.

22. *Angels . . . brightest fell*—Milton in his *Paradise Lost* describes the fall of angels from Heaven. Here the reference is to the brightest angel that fell, i.e. Satan, who was expelled from paradise for rebelling against God. The idea is that although Satan or Lucifer, as he was sometimes called, was hurled from heaven into hell for his transgressions, that did not in any way affect the virtue of the other angels. Thus, though Satan fell from virtue, virtue has not in any way changed her appearance. Therefore a close contact with Macbeth does not mean that Macduff's soul also is contaminated with germs of treachery.

23. *Though all things . . . grace*—though all things that are ugly and wicked may wear the appearance of innocence

and goodness. *Wear the brows*—assume the appearance. *Brows*—face. *Grace*—virtue ; goodness.

24. *Yet . . . so*—yet virtue must always wear its natural appearance, in spite of the fact that evil sometimes has borrowed its appearance. *Still*—always. *Look so*—wear the look of grace.

I have . . . hopes—I have lost the hopes I cherished for Scotland, i.e. the hope that you could be induced to redress the wrongs of your birthright.

25. *Even there*—for the same reason. You, perhaps, have lost your hopes for the very same reason that has made me suspect you, i.e. the strange leaving of your family in Scotland. Your present disappointment has arisen out of your own desertion of your family and this has led me to doubt your motives. *In that rawness*—in such hurry ; with that imprudent haste.

27. *Precious motive*—valuable impulses to love ; strong affection for one's family which often guides a man's conduct. *Motives*—impulses influence persons who influence your action. *Knots*—ties of affection with which a person is bound to his family.

28. *Without . . . taking*—without taking leave of them ; without bidding them farewell.

29. *Let not . . . dishonours*—let not the suspicions that I may entertain about you cast my slur on your good name, i.e. the fact that I suspect your honour need not necessarily be a dishonour to you.

30. *But mine own safeties*—consider my suspicions as arising out of my anxiety for my own safety. Malcolm must be suspicious to ensure his own safety.

31. *Rightly just*—truly just. With all my suspicions you may be strictly honourable. *Whatever . . . think*—whatever opinion I may have about your conduct.

32. *Grant tyranny* tyranny unchecked. *Basis*—foundation.

33. *Goodness*—virtue.

Let unchecked tyranny plant itself more firmly in the soil of Scotland, because virtue has not the courage to put it down. *Wear . . . wrongs*—(1) Continue your rule of crime

and bloodshed. (2) Wear triumphantly what you have obtained by crime. (3) Or it might refer to Scotland instead of Macbeth. Continue suffering under the wrongs inflicted on you: *Thy wrongs*—harms done to you. There is no chance of Scotland being saved in the near future. So the country should continue to suffer under the tyranny of Macbeth, who is now firmly established in his position.

34. *Affeer'd*—confirmed. A legal term. Macbeth's title to the throne of Scotland is now confirmed.

35. *I would . . . thinkest*—I would not be the villain that you take me to be.

36. *For*—in exchange. *Space*—kingdom. *Grasp*—clutches.

37. *To boot*—into the bargain ; in addition.

38. *In absolute fear*—fear not qualified by other reasons.

I do not speak what I have spoken solely because of my distrust of your motive ; I have other reasons equally important.

39. *Beneath the yoke*—under the burden of tyranny.

40. *Gash*—a deep graping wound.

41. *Withhold*—in addition.

42. *Hands . . . right*—hands raised to support my claim to the throne ; persons to help me to regain my kingdom.

43. *Gracious England*—gracious king of England.

44. *Goodly thousands*—an army consisting of a good number of soldiers.

45. *Tread*—trample ; set my foot on.

46. *Wear it* carry it. *Yet*—even after the fall of Macbeth.

47. *Vices*—evils.

48. *More sundry ways*—greater variety of ways.

49. *By him*—at the hands of the person. *What . . . be*—who could that be ?

51. *Particular of vice*—particular forms of vice. *So grafted*—implanted in such a way.

52. *Opened*—when they shall open out ; blossom. When these vices in me come to be revealed to the world.

53. *Seem*—appear. Macbeth would appear as white as snow by contrast to my evil deeds.

54. *Esteem*—consider. *Confineless harms*—unrestrained wrongs ; limitless injuries. *Legions*—multitude ; vast host.

57. *Top*—surpass ; outrival. *I grant him bloody*—I admit that he is blood-thirsty.

58. *Luxurious*—lustful. *Avaricious*—greedy. *False*—treacherous.

59. *Sudden*—hasty, impetuous. *Malicious*—malevolent ; full of vindictive feelings. *Smacking* tasting. I smack every sin that could be named in the world, i.e. I am guilty of, or have share in, every particular form of evil that exists in the world.

61. *In my*—to my. *Voluptuousness*—keen desire for sensual gratification.

63. *Matrons*—wives ; married women. *The cistern . . . lust*—His extreme desire is compared to a cistern of large tank. It is so huge that all the wives and daughters of Scotland would not be able to fill it up *Lust*—desire. *Continent*—impediments—restraining obstacles ; moral considerations which would make one hesitate in the unrestrained indulgence of lust. *O'erbear*—bear down ; remove forcibly.

65. *That*—what.

66-67. *Boundless intemperance . . . tyranny*—(1) Unrestrained appetite in a man's nature would be a tyranny, i.e. an overmastering vice which puts down the powers of will and reason. The extreme sensual desire would be a tyrant over his soul because it puts down with ruthless force everything that would tend to prevent its free play. (2) The reckless satisfaction of one's sensual appetite is a vice that cannot be controlled. In this case 'intemperance' would mean 'lack of control,' and 'nature,' 'one's natural cravings.' But this interpretation is rather too far-fetched.

68. *Untimely emptying*—dethronement before the proper time. *Happy throne*—happy kings.

70. *What is yours*—what legitimately belongs to you.

71. *Convey your pleasures*—Manage stealthily the craving of your sensual appetite. 'Convey' is a slang term for

'steal, purloin.' *Spacious plenty*—in abundant supply.

72. *And yet seem cold*—and yet appear temperate; moderate in your desires. *Hoodwink*—deceive.

73. *We have . . . enough*—In Scotland there are enough women of loose character, who would be willing to satisfy your passion.

74. *That vulture in you*—such a vulture in you.

75. *To great dedicate themselves*—give themselves up wholly to people of high birth.

76. *Finding it so inclined*—finding him so inclined. Finding that he has a passion for the satisfaction of his sexual desires.

77. *Most ill-composed affection*—most evilly compounded natural qualities; a nature which is so evilly fashioned or made.

78. *Staunchless*—unquenchable.

79. *Cut off*—slaughter; put to death.

80. *His*—one man's. *This other's*—another man's or a second man's.

81. *More having*—having more; possessing more. *Sauce*—incentive; attraction. 'Sauce' literally is that which makes food more appetising. *Hunger more*—hunger for more. *Forge*—invent.

85. *Sticks deeper*—has a deeper root. *Pernicious*—injurious.

86. *Summer seeming lust*—seeming like summer: sexual desire has only a short duration like the summer season. Avarice, on the other hand, is a worse vice, because it exists in the human heart always.

87. *The sword . . . kings*—the sword which has slain kings.

88. *Foisons*—rich crops. *To fill up your will*—to satisfy your avarice.

89. *Of your mere own*—with what is your very own; out of what actually belongs to you. *Portable*—endurable; tolerable.

90. *Weighed*—compared. These defects in your nature will be more than compensated for by other goodly

qualities.

91. *I have none*—I have none of these virtues. *King-becoming virtues*—noble virtues worthy of a king.

92. *As*—such as. *Verity*—truthfulness. *Temperance*—self-restraint. *Stableness*—constancy.

93. *Bounty*—generosity. *Lowliness*—humility.

94. *Devotion*—piety. *Fortitude*—courage in adversity.

95. *I have no relish of them*—I have no taste of them; I do not have the least tinge of any of these virtues. *Abound in*—excels in; practises freely.

96. *The division*—the different varieties; the several forms. *Several*—separate.

97. *Acting in many ways*—committing sins in a number of ways. *Had I power*—if I had power.

98. *Concord*—harmony; agreement. Banish altogether from the earth the soft and gentle influences of peace and harmony. The word 'meek' is always used by Shakespeare to denote things which are gentle, things which have a softening and beneficent influence on human nature.

99. *Uproar*—break up into factions, contending against one another. *Confound*—destroy.

102. *As I have spoken*—as I have described myself to be. *Fit to govern*! Note Macduff's virtuous indignation.

103. *Not to live*—he is not even fit to live.

104. *Untitled tyrant*—a tyrant who has no title or claim to the throne. *Bloody Sceptr'd*—(1) A sceptre which is blood-stained; kingship attained through bloody deeds. (2) A king who maintains his power and authority by cruel means. Sceptre is the staff borne as the symbol of imperial authority.

105. *Wholesome days*—days of happiness and prosperity.

106. *Truest issue*—legitimate heir by birth.

107. *By his own . . . accursed*—by his own condemnations stands debarred from the throne of Scotland. *Interdiction*—condemnation. A church term denoting the power of the Pope to pass an order of interdiction or condemnation against sinners. Such an interdiction prohibited

persons from joining all ecclesiastical functions. *Accursed*—under a curse or ban.

108. *Blaspheme*—speak irreverently of ; slanders. *His breed* - family ; race.

109. *Sainted*—saintly.

111. *On her knees*—kneeling in the attitude of prayer. *Died every day she lived* :

(1) Every moment of her life she was prepared for death. Her thoughts were only directed towards heaven and she was not bound by any ties to the world.

(2) She 'prepared herself for death by a life that was dead to the vanities of the world.' (Verity).

(3) She prepared herself for her approaching death by fasting, penance, prayers, etc. She subjected her body to every kind of suffering for the purification of her soul, so that every day was for her a living death.

112. *These evils*—these very vices.

114. *Thy hope*—your hope of seeing Scotland happy and prosperous. *This noble passion*—this violent outburst of noble emotion ; here grief.

115. *Child of integrity*—which arise out of your sincerity and honesty. *Wip'd* removed. *Black scruples*—dark suspicions.

117. *Reconciled . . . honour*—accustomed my thoughts to your truth and sincerity, i.e. I am now convinced of your honourable nature and unimpeachable honesty. *Good*—blameless.

118. *Trains*—artifices. *Win me*—lure me ; entice me.

119. *Modest wisdom*—wisdom which holds back out of modesty ; prudence which keeps him back till he is sure of his way ; prudence which considers everything before committing itself to any line of action. *Plucks*—withholds.

120. *Over-credulous haste*—too great a hurry to believe what others say.

121-122. *God above . . . me*—let God above be the judge of the dealings between us.

122. *Put . . . direction*—place myself under your guidance.

123. *Unspeak mine own detraction*—withdraw the slander I have just now uttered against myself. *Unspeak*—unsay ; withdraw. *Detraction*—slander ; abuse ; accusation. *Abjure*—renounce on oath ; deny.

124. *Taints*—blemishes. *Blames*—faults.

125. *For strangers to my nature*—as being foreign to my nature. *Forsworn*—perjured myself.

127. *Coveted*—longed to possess.

128. *Faith*—promise ; pledge. *Betray* - be disloyal to ; deceive treacherously.

129. *The devil to his fellow*—the devil to another like him.

131. *Was this upon myself*—was what I have said just now against myself ? *What I am truly*—whatever virtue I truly possess.

132. *Is thine . . . command*—is at your disposal and at the disposal of my poor country.

133. *Whither*—to which place. *Here-approach*—approach or arrival here.

135. *At a point*—armed to the point ; fully armed and prepared in every detail.

136. *We'll together*—we shall go together.

136-137. *The chance . . . quarrel. Goodness*—success. *Warranted*—justified.

(1) May the chances of our victory be as favourable as the justice of our cause.

(2) May the fortunes of our virtue be assured as the cause of our quarrel. Here 'warranted' means 'assured, certain,' and 'chance,' 'fortune.'

139. *At once*—at the same time.

140. *Reconcile*—harmonise ; it is difficult to adjust oneself to ideas so opposed to each other.

140. *Well' ; more anon*—we shall speak more about this presently.

141. *Crew*—company. *Wretched souls*—persons who are sick.

142. *Stay the cure*—wait to be cured by him. *Con-*

vinces—confuses ; defeats.

143. *The great . . . art*—the best efforts of medical science.

144. *Sanctity*—holiness.

145. *Presently*—immediately. *Amend*—get well.

146. *The evil*—the king's evil. The disease is called scrofula, often known as king's evil, because of the common superstition that the touch of the king's hand could cure this disease. Shakespeare in these lines is paying a compliment to king James.

148. *Here-remain*—residence here. Such compound words are very common in O. E.

149. *Solicits heaven*—moves heaven by prayer.

150. *Himself*-he himself. *Strangely-visited people*—people affected with strange diseases.

151. *All* completely ; everywhere in the body. *Ulcerous*—open sores. *Pitiful to the eye*—a sight that would excite pity ; a sight too horrible to be seen.

152. *Mere*—utter. *Surgery*—the art of surgery ; surgeons.

153. *Golden stamp*—golden coin. *Stamp*—a piece of metal on which something is stamped. This coin presented was called a 'touch-piece.'

155. *Succeeding royalty*—the kings who succeed him.

156. *The healing benediction*—the blessed power of healing.

158. *Sundry*—several ; numerous. *Hang about the throne*—surrounds his royal person.

159. *Speak*—proclaim. *Full of grace*—as one full of the grace of God.

160. *My countryman*—he recognises him to be a Scotchman by his national costume.

162. *Betimes*—at an early time.

163. *Means*—reasons ; causes.

164. *Stands Scotland*—stands the affairs of Scotland ; does the state of affairs remain the same as it was before in Scotland ?

165. *To know itself*—to understand itself; that it is even afraid to consider the state of things within it.

166. *Nothing*—no one. *But who knows nothing*—except those who are ignorant of the conditions. *Once*—ever.

168. *Rent*—pierce.

169. *Not mark'd* not noticed, because it is such a common occurrence.

170. *Modern*—everyday. *Ecstasy*—extreme emotion. *Knell*—funeral bell.

171. *There*—in Scotland. Men never care to ask who has died because sudden and unnatural deaths have become an everyday affair.

172. *Expire*—perish.

173. *Sicken*—fade away; wither. *Relation*- something related or narrated; story. *Too nice*—too elaborate in every minute detail.

174. *Grief* cause of grief; calamity.

175. *That of an hour's age*—the news which is an hour old. *Hiss*—a stage metaphor expressing the displeasure or dissatisfaction of the audience. *Teems*—abounds.

Events take place in such feverish haste in Scotland that people would hiss at the news of an hour ago, because much would have happened since then. The story of some calamity of an hour ago would cause hiss, for each moment turns out some new woe or other.

178. *Batter'd at*—broke upon; disturbed violently.

179. Note the irony of words. There is a truth in this which Macduff does not know, but which the audience know. They know that Macduff's wife and children are dead; hence they are, indeed, well at peace.

180. *Niggard*—miserly. *How goes't*—how goes the news?

181. *Transport*—convey; carry. *Tidings*—news.

182. *Heavily borne*—carried heavily, i.e. with a heavy or sad heart.

183. *Were out*—were out in open defiance of Macbeth;

were out in rebellion. *Was to my belief witnessed*—was proved to my judgment. *Witnessed*—proved ; confirmed. *The rather*—rather.

185. *For that*—because ; by the fact. *A-foot*—on the march. *Power*—forces.

185. *Your eye*—a mere look from your eye.

188. *Doff*—throw away. Literally it means 'do off,' i.e. cast away. *Dire*—terrible. *Distresses*—afflictions ; calamities. *Be't their comfort*—let this be their comfort.

190. *England*—king of England. *Christendom*—Christian world. *Gives out*—can give out. Christendom can show none who is a better soldier and more experienced than Siward. *Would*—I wish.

193. *This comfort*—this comforting tidings.

194. *Would be*—should be. *Desert air*—some lonely place.

195. *Hearing*—human hearing. *Latch*—catch. *What concern they*—whom do they concern ?

196. *The general cause*—do they affect the nation as a whole. *Fee-grief*—private grief. This is a survival of the old feudal term. 'Fee' denotes complete ownership of a land. So fee-grief is a sorrow which is the property of some particular person.

197. *Due to*—belonging to.

197-98. *No mind . . . some woe*—no man who is capable of any sincerity of feeling would fail to share in this grief.

199. *Pertains to you* - concerns you ; belongs to you.

201. *Despise*-- scorn.

202. *Possess them*—make them possessors of. *Heaviest*—saddest ; most grievous.

203. *I guess at it*—I can now guess what it is.

204. *Surpris'd*—seized suddenly.

206. *Were*—would be. *Quarry*—heap of animals killed. The metaphor is drawn from hunting, a favourite exercise of the aristocrats in the Elizabethan age. Quarry, literally, is the heap of the animals killed in a day's hunt. Ross

means that if he were to narrate the manner of the slaughter of his family, Macduff himself would fall dead on the heap of the slain.

Note the pun on the word 'deer.' It means (*a*) the animals killed literally ; (*b*) dear ones slain.

209. *Give sorrow words*—give expression to your sorrow.

210. *Over-fraught heart*—heart overcharged with powerful emotions.

212. *And I must be from thence*—and to think that at such a time I must be away from home and be not in a position to protect them.

214. *Let us seek consolation in our revenge*—let revenge be the medicine which would cure our sorely afflicted heart.

216. *He has no children*—the word 'he' in this passage may refer either to Malcolm or Macbeth.

(1) If it refers to Malcolm, then the meaning would be 'being not a father himself, he cannot realise my heavy sorrow.' This would be an answer to Malcolm's words 'be comforted.'

(2) Coming after the suggestion of revenge, it is quite possible that the passage refers to Macbeth. 'Macbeth has no children whom I can murder and thus avenge myself'. But it must be noted in this connection that hitherto we have had no reference whatever to the children of Macbeth, and this is too important a detail to be introduced in such an insignificant way, as it would be done, if we were to favour the second interpretation.

(3) Still another possible interpretation is that Macbeth could never have ordered the savage slaughter of his children, if he had children of his own. Prof. Brandley prefers this third interpretation. 'The whole idea of the passage is that Macduff must feel grief first and before he can feel anything else, e.g. the desire for vengeance . . . Macduff is not the man to conceive at any time the idea of killing children in retaliation ; and that he contemplates here, even as a suggestion, I find it hard to believe.'

Hereford favours the first interpretation. He thinks

that 'He is probably Malcolm whose talk of comfort at such a moment is thus rebutted and explained. Macbeth lies wholly beyond the pale of such reproach.'

217. *Hell-kite*—Macduff compares Macbeth to a hell-kite, a bird noted for its cruelty, and his own babes to chickens. Note the simple words of Macduff under the stress of powerful emotion and his genuine grief.

218. *Dam*—mother. *Fell*—cruel. *Sweep*—plunge.

220. *Dispute it*—fight it; give battle to your grief.

221. *But . . . man*—but I will feel it like any other man who loves his family.

222. *Such things*—his wife and children.

224. *Would not take*—did not take.

225. *Struck for thee*—killed on account of your negligence. *Naught*—wicked; a worthless fellow.

227. *Fell slaughter on their souls*—they were cruelly slaughtered. *Heaven . . . now*—may heaven grant them peace.

228. *Whetstone*—a stone on which sword is sharpened.

229. *Convert anger*—incite anger with the spirit of revenge. *Blunt not the heart*—do not deaden the heart; do not be indifferent. *Enrage it*—rouse it to anger and action.

230. *Play . . . eyes*—I could shed tears like a woman.

231. *Braggart*—boast.

234. *Cut . . . intermission*—shorten all delay. *Front to front*—face to face.

234. *Within my sword's length*—within the reach of my sword. *Set*—place.

235. *Too*—if he escapes, I shall not complain if heaven also does so.

236. *This tune manly*—this strain of talk befits a man. *Power*—forces. *Ready*—ready for action.

237. *Our lack . . . leave.* (1) All that we lack now is permission from the king. (2) All that we have to do now is say 'goodbye.'

238. *Ripe for shaking* the time is come for Macbeth to yield them their revenge ; his fall is not far off. *Powers above*—heavenly powers.

239. *Put on their instruments*—setting to work their ministers of vengeance. Malcolm and Macduff are the instruments of fate for the overthrow and retribution of Macbeth. *Cheer*—comfort ; encouragement.

240. *The night . . . day.* No night can be so long that it will not end giving rise to the comforts of the day. Even the longest night should come to an end and merge itself in the joy of the morning.

ACT V

SCENE I

Analysis of the Scene.

In this scene we get Lady Macbeth for the last time in the play. The Gentlewoman had reported to the doctor about her sleep-walking and the doctor has been watching her for two nights without this strange disease making its appearance. He asks the attendant Lady to report what the woman had said in her last sleep-walking, but the lady is afraid to do so, especially since there is no one to corroborate her statement.

Presently the doctor himself is able to see the disease first-hand. Lady Macbeth appears bearing a taper, going about with her eyes wide open, but evidently in deep sleep, and all the while talking to herself. She rubs her hands crying : 'Out, damned spot, out.' She shouts words of encouragement to her lord, remarks on the vast amount of bloodshed by the old man, and asks what has become of the wife of the thane of Fife. Her thought now goes back again to blood, and she moans 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.' The doctor from these disconnected, incoherent utterances and extremely agitated manner is at last able to suspect something as to the real cause of the ailment and pronounces the disease beyond the powers of his medical skill. Now Lady Macbeth, who

had been for some time silent starts, and cries ; she bids her husband not to be afraid because Banquo is dead and buried and cannot come out of his grave. She seems to hear a knocking at the gate and goes to bed after persuading her husband to do the same. The doctor having understood everything sets down her malady to 'unnatural deeds' and declares that she is more in need of a priest than a doctor. He departs after asking the Lady to see that the queen does not commit any violence on herself.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The importance of this scene lies in the light it throws on the character of Lady Macbeth. She now reveals herself as a woman with a 'sorely charged heart,' a woman who had 'faced every crisis through sheer force of nerve', a woman who in spite of her strong will has at last failed to mask her real womanly qualities.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Watched*—kept awake.

2. *Perceive*—discover. *Your report*—your report that the queen walks in her sleep.

3. *Walked*—walked in her sleep.

4. *The field*—the field of battle. Some critics point out an inconsistency here because later in the Act we are told that Macbeth has shut himself up in the castle at Dunsinane. Perhaps Shakespeare refers to Macbeth's movements to put down the various rebellious factions the existence of which has already been pointed out to us by Ross in the last scene.

6. *Closet*—cabinet.

9. *A Great*—it must be great. *Perturbation*—disorder ; confusion.

10. *Do the effects of watching*—do the actions of a person who is awake. *Effects*—actions.

11. *Slumbery agitation*—disturbances taking place during slumber or sleep.

12. *Actual performances*—actual physical activities.

13. *Report*—repeat. *After*—according to; in the fashion of.

The Lady in attendance is afraid to repeat the words Lady Macbeth had uttered in her sleep.

15. *Meet*—necessary ; desirable.

18. *Confirm my speech*—corroborate what I say.

19. *Guise*—manner. *Fast asleep*—she is fast asleep.

20. *Stand close*—stand covered ; remain hidden ; keep out of her sight.

21. *How came she by that light*—how did she get that light ?

25. *But . . . shut*—the sense of vision is closed. The eyes are open, but they do not function ; the sight faculty is closed.

28. *Accustomed*—usual, customary.

30. *In this*—in this act.

33. *To satisfy . . . strongly*—to assure myself that my memory does not deceive me.

33-34. Lady Macbeth now is recalling in her mind the murder of Duncan. She counts the strokes of the clock and awaits the appointed hour.

35. *Murky*—gloomy and dark. Her mind is deranged and confused. All these things which she painfully recounts, one by one, had left a deep inerasible impression in her heart when they actually took place.

37. *Call . . . account*—question our power.

38. *The old man*—Duncan.

44. *No more o' that*—no more of this fear. *Mar all*—spoil everything.

46. *Go to*—same expression as 'come now.'

48. *Known*—experienced ; suffered.

50. *Perfumes of Arabia*—Arabia is noted for its spices and perfumes. Compare with her words in Act II.

'A little water clears us of this deed
How easy is it, then !

55. *For the dignity . . . body*—for all the dignities that

are attached to her as queen.

55. *It be*—it will be well with her as you say. The Gentlewoman takes the meaning of the word 'well' in the literal sense of the term.

58. *Beyond my practice*—beyond my skill.

60. *Die well holily in their beds*—die in a natural manner with their minds at peace; die after receiving the blessings of the church.

61—63. A confused picture of both the murders is now before her mind.

64. *Even so*—just so. So they are responsible for the murder of Banquo as well.

69. *Directly*—at once.

70. *Foul whisperings*—whisperings or rumours of evil deeds.

Abroad—circulated. *Unnatural deeds*—abnormal deeds; terrible crimes.

71. *Infected minds*—minds tainted or troubled by knowledge of crimes.

72. *Deaf pillows*—pillows which cannot hear them. *Discharge*—disclose; reveal.

73. *Divine*—priest. She requires spiritual help because her malady is the malady of the mind and not that of the body. A doctor can treat her only if she has any bodily suffering. The priest is the proper person to console the afflicted suffering soul.

75. *The means . . . . annoyance*—keep out of her reach all things that might help her to injure herself.

76. *Still*—always.

77. *Mated*—bewildered; confused.

78. *I think. But dare not speak*—several thoughts arise in my mind but I dare not give expression to them.

SCENE II

Analysis of the Scene.

The Scottish lords with their men are on the move to join the forces of Malcolm, as it marches against the castle

of Dunsinane, near Birnam Wood. Macbeth has been strongly fortifying his position at Dunsinane. Some say that he is mad, some others who do not hate him so much consider him stirred up with 'valiant fury.' He cannot control his factious army and they are slowly deserting his ranks one by one. Besides, his deeds of blood are haunting him and tormening his soul. No wonder all the different faculties in him rebel at being put into such a wicked nature.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

This side-scene reveals, further, the divided condition of Scotland. Several of the nobles have openly defied Macbeth, and are ready to join Malcolm's ranks. The followers of the tyrant are slowly deserting him : Macbeth is rapidly nearing the precipice.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Power*—army.

2. *Uncle Siward*—Siward was the maternal grandfather of Malcolm. Shakespeare was always careless about such minor details.

3. *Revenges burn in them*—they are excited or strongly moved by feelings of revenge. *Dear causes*—the causes dear to their hearts. To revenge the murder of his wife and children is a desire close to Macduff's heart.

4. *Bleeding and the grim alarm*—The word 'bleeding' may be either taken as an adjective or as a noun.

(1) If we take 'bleeding' as a noun, the meaning would be 'bloodshed and noisy call to arms.'

(2) Bleeding may be taken as an adjective qualifying 'alarm.' The meaning then would be 'grim and bloody battle.'

Mortified man—may be interpreted in two ways :

(1) An ascetic who has so disciplined his feelings that he is dead or indifferent to the ordinary feelings and interests of the world.

(2) 'Mortified' used in the Latin sense would mean a 'dead man.'

4-5. *For their dear causes . . . . mortified man*—The meaning of the passage changes according to the interpretation we give to 'mortified man.'

(1) The causes close to their hearts raise such intense motives of revenge that they would make even a dead man participate in the grim and bloody battle.

(2) The causes which affect them so vitally would call to arms even an ascetic who is usually so indifferent to the concerns of the world.

(3) Still another interpretation has been suggested, which is, no doubt, very ingenious, but not convincing. Some critics find in it a reference to an old Scottish custom, the 'Ordeal of Touching.' This was an ancient method of detecting murder and it arose from the superstitious belief that if the dead body is touched by the actual murderer, the corpse would bleed afresh. Then the meaning would be, 'their causes of revenge are so intense that they would start bleeding even in a corpse and raise in it feelings of grim alarm.' This interpretation, however, is too far-fetched.

6. *Who knows*—does anyone know ?

7. *For certain*—certainly. *File*—list.

8. *Gentry*—nobles.

10. *Unrough*—unbearded ; smooth-chinned.

11. *Protest . . . . manhood*—proclaim that they have arrived at their manhood, and are no longer smooth-chinned boys.

12. *What . . . tyrant ?*—What is the tyrant doing ?

13. *Lesser hate him*—hate him less. Everyone hates him ; the difference is only a question of degree.

14. *Valiant fury*—courage arising out of despair.

15-16. *He cannot . . . . . belt of rule*—he cannot keep under discipline his disorganised followers. The metaphor is that of a person wearing a belt round his waist and keeping it within its confines. Macbeth is unable to keep his discontented followers under the belt of his authority. *Buckle*—fasten with buckle. *Distemper'd cause*—disorganised party ; discontented followers. *Rule*—discipline.

17 *Sticking to his hands*—clinging to his hands and thus interfering with his actions.

18. *Minutely*—very minute. *Revolts*—revolts of his followers. *Upbraid*—reproach. *Faith-breach*—his breach of faith, or his treachery to Duncan. Now every minute the revolts of his followers reproach him with his treachery to his king.

19. *Move only in command*—obey him only out of a sense of discipline.

20. *In love*—out of love.

21-22. Macbeth is like a dwarf who has put on the garments of a giant, and who feels every minute that his clothes are slipping away from him. He has stolen the title of king from Duncan and finds it rather too high for him. He feels that his title is slowly slipping away from him.

23. *Pester'd senses*—harassed senses. *To recoil and start*—for recoiling and starting.

24. *All that . . . him*—every faculty in him. *March we on*—let us march on.

26. *Obedience* - service.

27. *Meet we*—let us meet. *Medicine*—the physcian, i.e. Malcolm.

27. *Sickly weal*—sickly existence ; the distressed condition of Scotland.

28. *Purge*—purge or removal of evil. *Each drop of us*—every drop of blood in us.

30. *Dew*—cover with dew.

· Malcolm is the sovereign flower which is to be bedewed and refreshed. The weeds denote Macbeth who should be drowned in the bloodshed for the deliverance of Scotland.

SCENE III

Analysis of the Scene.

Macbeth hears how his followers are deserting him one by one. But why should he fear ? He cannot be touched till Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane. Further, had not the witches prophesied that no man born of woman can

harm Macbeth ! Well, let them all desert and join the English ranks.

A servant pale with fear now enters and reports the approach of ten thousand English soldiers. Macbeth tells his attendant Seyton how he is sick at heart. The issue of this struggle will decide his fate for ever. He is weary of life. The honour, love and obedience, which other people can expect in their old age, he will never get. For him there are only stifled curses, and empty streams of flattery. Macbeth feels sad when he thinks of 'what might have been.'

He calls Seyton to help him to don his armour and all the while talks quite excitedly to the doctor who had come to report the condition of Lady Macbeth. He asks the doctor whether he has no medicine to cure the diseases of the mind. The doctor has none. In that case, Macbeth says, he will have nothing to do with him. He next asks the doctor whether he has not any powerful drug which would purge the country of these English invaders. Right in the middle of this remark he impatiently asks his servant to remove his armour and the next moment being reminded of the march of the English forces, asks Seyton to help him into his armour again. His mind once more goes back to the predictions of the witches. He assures himself that he will never be dethroned till Birnam Wood moves to Dunsinane.

The doctor who has been a silent witness of Macbeth's mental turmoils now goes out muttering to himself, that if he once gets the opportunity to depart from Dunsinane, no love of profit would lure him back to it again.

Ctritical Comments on the Scene.

When we see Macbeth again in this scene, after a lapse of some time, we note in him a definite change of outlook. He has bartered his soul to the devil and is reaping the reward thereof. Macbeth, tired and weary at heart, reviews the 'might have beens' and emits a deep sigh. The pleasures that accompany other people in their old age are not for him. We are impressed by an awful sense of waste. An exile from the land of his birth, all his brilliant talents

brought to dust, his soul steeped in crime, with no hope for him in this world, and the one to come, our hearts go out to him in sheer pity. And this is tragedy in the fullest Shakespearian sense. 'In the very depths a gleam of his native love of goodness, and with it a touch of tragic grandeur rests upon him. The evil he has desperately embraced continues to madden or to wither his inmost heart. No experience of the world could bring him to glory in it or make his peace with it, or to forget what he once was and Iago and Goneril never were. Throughout, even when he is like a bear harassed by dogs, to borrow his own comparison, we get occasional flashes of his physical courage, and right to the end he earns to a certain measure our respect, and commands to the fullest extent our admiration.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Reports*—reports of the desertion of his nobles. *Let them fly all*—let all of them join the ranks of the enemy. Macbeth is quite certain of his final victory.

3. *Taint with fear*—be tainted or affected by fear.

4. *Was . . . woman?*—He still has his faith in the prophetic utterances of the witches.

5. *All mortal consequences*—all that will happen to men in the future. *Pronounced me thus*—declared for my benefit the following prediction.

7. *False*—treacherous.

8. *Mingle*—associate; join the ranks. *English epicures*—English people are noted for their living, and their love of luxury and pleasure. English hospitality has become proverbial and England has always been famous for her roast-beef and plum-pudding. The Scottish people believed that the English lived only to eat and drink.

9. *The mind I sway by*—the mind by which I am swayed; the mind which controls all my actions.

10. *Sag*—bend; sink.

11. *Cream-fac'd*—a face with the colour of cream; white or pale faced. *Loon*—rogue; a worthless fellow.

12. *Goose look*—the stupid look of a goose. The goose has always been noted for its stupidity in England

just as the fox is noted for its cunning.

13. *Geese, villain*—do you mean ten thousand geese, you rogue?

14. *Prick thy face*—thereby making it bleed. *Over-red*—cover over with red.

15. *Lily-liver'd*—cowardly. In the Middle Ages the liver was considered to be the seat of man's courage. A dark bloody liver denotes courage, whereas a pale liver indicates a cowardly disposition. Hence lily-livered means 'a liver which has the pale colour of the flower lily.' *Patch*—clown.

16. *Death of thy soul*—a common oath without any special significance. *Linen cheeks*—cheeks as white as linen.

17. *Counsellors*—advisers; something that would stir up fear in the hearts of people. *Whey-face*—pale face.

18. *So please you*—may it please you.

19. *Take . . . . hence*—get away. *Sick*—oppressed or weary.

20. *Push*—attack.

21. *Cheer me ever*—secure me for ever on the chair, i.e. the throne of Scotland. The Folio reading 'cheer' means 'make me happy for ever.' *Disseat me*—dethrone me. *My way of life*—the course of my life.

23. *Is fall'n into the sear*—has withered; has become dry.

26. *Look*—expect.

27. *Stead*—place.

28. *Deep*—coming from the very bottom of the heart. The people are afraid to utter curses aloud for fear of punishment, but, nevertheless, they are sincere. *Mouth honour*—words expressing insincere honour. *Breath*—idle words; flattery.

29. *Poor heart*—cowardly flatterer. *Would faint deny*—would rather withhold. *Dare not*—has not the courage.

30. *What news more?*—have you received any other report?

32. *Hacked*—cut down to pieces.

35. *Moe*—more. *Horses*—horsemen. *Skir*—sweep.

37. *How does your patient*—how is your patient progressing? *Sick*—ill.

38. *Thick-coming fancies*—mental images coming fast, one after another.

39. *Keeps her*—prevents her.

40. *Minister*—attend. *Mind diseased*—a mind deranged; a mind afflicted with illness.

41. *Rooted sorrow*—firmly established sorrow.

42. *Raze*—erase; wipe out.

43. *Oblivious antidote*—an antidote causing forgetfulness. *Antidote*—a remedy against the poison of sorrow in the heart of Lady Macbeth.

44. *Stuff'd bosom*—overcharged bosom. *Perilous stuff*—the poison in it which causes peril or danger; the tormenting thoughts.

45. *Weighs*—put down as with a heavy weight; oppresses.

47. *Physic*—medicine. An oft-quoted line. *I'll none of it*—I will have nothing to do with it.

48. *Staff* - general's baton.

49. *Send out*—send out more horsemen. Macbeth's mind is confused and he completely forgets what he has said a little while ago.

50. *Despatch*—be quick.

51. *Cast the water . . . land*—examine the water of the land. The doctor should find out the disease of Scotland by an analysis of her water. A technical term. *Water*—urine.

52. *Purge it*—purify it. *Pristine*—former.

53. *To the very echo*—till the echoes also seem to take up your applause; till the applause produces echoes.

54. *It*—armour.

55. *Rhubarb*—a herb used to prepare medicines for purgative use. Chaucer mentions it in his *Canterbury Tales*. *Sena*—another wellknown herb used as purgative.

56. *Scour*—clear out. *Hence*—away from Scotland.

57. *Your royal preparation*—the preparation you are

making now. *Makes us hear something*—made us enquire into and thus hear something about the approach of the English forces. *Bring it after me*—the armour.

58. *Bane*—destruction.

60. *Were I*—if I were.

62. *Profit*—the love of gain.

Scene IV

Analysis of the Scene.

Malcolm with his forces reaches the Birnam Wood, and there issues an order that everyone of his soldiers should cut down a branch and carry it before him, so that the king's scouts may not be able to form a correct estimate of their numerical strength. Siward has heard that Macbeth has shut himself up in the Dunsinane castle and is awaiting the siege. Malcolm at this remarks that it is his only hope, his followers continuing to desert him, one by one, in this grave hour of danger. Even those with him remain under his banner only out of a sense of discipline. Macduff, however, prefers not to discuss the possibilities of success or failure at such a premature hour; he would rather discuss affairs after things have been settled by deeds of arms. Siward agrees to this and the army marches on.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The scene reveals the character of Macduff. He is a man of few words and would not indulge in surmises and conjectures, till the issues are decided by arms.

This scene further points out the irony of the predictions of the supernatural. Taken in the literal sense of the term there is fulfilment of the prophecy, for it appears to Macbeth's servant that Birnam wood does move to Dunsinane. But this fulfilment is quite in opposition to the hopes the prophecy had raised in the heart of Macbeth.

Notes and Explanations

2. *Chambers will be safe*-rooms in houses will be resting places and not scenes of murder. The reference is to the murder of Duncan.

The day would soon dawn on Scotland when people

can sleep in their chambers without the fear of being murdered. *We doubt it nothing*—we do not doubt it in the least.

4. *Hew*—cut.

5. *Bear't*—carry it. *Shadow*—conceal ; hide.

6. *Discover*—scouts sent to discover the position and strength of the host.

7. *Err . . . us*—make a mistake in the report of our strength.

8. *No other but*—nothing else except ; no other information except that.

9. *Keeps still*—remains still. *Endure . . . it*—will resist our attempts to storm it. *Setting down before*—besieging.

11. *Where there is . . . given*—wherever an opportunity presents itself. *More or less*—great and small ; nobles and commons.

12. *Constrained things*—men who are constrained or compelled.

13. *Whose hearts are absent too*—whose interests are not in the service ; who have no enthusiasm for their work.

14. *Censures*—opinions. *Just censure*—judgment.

15. *Attend*—await. *The true event*—the decisive event ; battle.

16. *Put we on*—let us put on ; engage ourselves in. *Industrious soldiership*—soldierly activities ; proper martial preparations.

17. *With due decision*—in a decisive manner. *Make us know*—reveal to us.

18. *What we shall say we have*—what we have won. *What we owe*—what we have lost.

19. *Thoughts speculative*—conjectures.

Their unsure hope relate—gives expression to uncertain hopes ; lead to hopes that can never be realised. *Relate*—report ; express. *Certain issue*—definite result. *Arbitrate*—decide, determine. *Advance the war*—let the forces march on.

Scene V

Analysis of the Scene.

Macbeth asks his followers to fly his colour on the outer walls of the Dunsinane Castle. He is quite confident of the strength of the castle and feels sure that he can resist the attacking forces till they are destroyed by hunger and ague. If some of his own men had not joined the ranks of the enemy, he would have issued forth from the castle and sent them back home in haste.

Suddenly a terrible cry is heard from within. Seyton goes to enquire and Macbeth, left to himself, comments on his own hardening of nerves. There was a time when even the slightest noise would have startled him ; when a night shriek would make his hair stand on end. But now he has been steeped to the full in horrors, and does not mind them in the least.

Seyton reports that the queen is dead. Macbeth receives the news calmly, ponders for a while, and says that in any case she would have died some time or other. He feels weary of life. It drags on from day to day till the inevitable hour approaches, and then there is the end of everything. While in this weary attitude a messenger reports that Birnam Wood is moving to Dunsinane. Macbeth now, for the first time, begins to suspect the prophecy of the witches. He has only one alternative, stir out with arms and die fighting like a brave soldier.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

A note of weariness and despair characterises the whole scene. Macbeth calmly awaits events, being sure that he cannot escape from the toils of his own sin. But his physical courage never deserts him till the very end. He determines to die like a brave soldier with ' his harness on the back.'

Some critics have gone to the extent of saying that Macbeth is not in any way deeply affected by the sudden and violent death of Lady Macbeth. Coleridge's remarks on this would dispel all our false ideas on the matter. 'Alas for Macbeth ! now all is inward with him ; he has no more prudential prospective reasonings. His wife, the only being

who could have had any seat in his affections, dies ; he puts on despondency, the final heart-armour of the wretched, and would fain think everything shadowy and unsubstantial, as indeed all things are to those who cannot regard them as symbols of goodness.' His sorrow is too deep to be expressed in words.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Outward*—outer.

2. *Still*—always.

3. *Will laugh a siege to scorn*—would laugh with scorn all attempts to take it by force ; would enable us to laugh at their attempts to take the castle by storm. *Lie*—remain.

4. *Ague*—fever. *Eat them up*—destroy them.

5. *Forced*—reinforced, i.e. if they had not been strengthened by those who should have been fighting on my side.

6. *Dareful*—boldly. *Beard to beard*—face to face.

9. *Forgot*—forgotten. *The taste of fears*—what fear is.

10. *The time has been*—the time has been when. *My senses . . . cool*—a cold shiver would have run through my frame.

11. *Fell of hair*—head of hair.

12. *Dismal treatise*—a story of horror. *Rouse and stir*—rise up and stand on ends.

13. *As*—as if. *I have supp'd . . . horrors*—I have filled myself to the full with horrors.

14. *Direness*—horror. *Slaughterous*—murderous.

15. *Once*—even once. Macbeth has become so hardened by deeds of crime that horror cannot any more terrify him. *Wherefore*—why.

16. *She should have died hereafter* :

(1) *Hereafter*—some time or other. She was bound to die sooner or later in any case. (2) *Hereafter*—not today. *Should*—ought not. She ought not to have died at this present juncture.

Macbeth seems to be almost indifferent to his wife's death and this has led many critics to suspect that he does not feel any grief whatever at the loss of his wife. He has

been steeped in crime to such an extent that he is incapable of all human feelings. This is, however, rather too rash a conclusion to arrive at. The fact that Macbeth submits calmly to the inevitable and faces his sorrow like a man does not in any way warrant the conclusion that he is callous and hard-hearted.

18. *Such a word*—the news of her death.

20. *In this petty pace*—with this slow and monotonous regularity. *To the last syllable of recorded time*—to the very last syllable entered in the Book of Time ; the very last day of the span of life allotted to human beings by destiny or fate.

20-23. Men always expect their prospects to brighten up tomorrow but that tomorrow never dawns till they reach the last hour of the terms of life allotted to them by destiny. Time slowly creeps from day to day with soft and slow regularity and the days, that they have passed, are only the lighted candles leading them to dismal, dusty death.

23. *Dusty*—dust of the grave. Reminiscent of 'dust to dust.' *Brief candle*—the brief life of man on earth.

25. *Shadow*—phantom. *Poor*—mediocre.

25. *Struts*—goes about with a dignified air. *Frets*—storms. *His hour*—his allotted hour.

A very favourite idea of Shakespeare's cf. *As You Like It*:

'All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.'

27. *Full of sound and fury*—full of idle boast and rage.

Life is only a shadow, because everything in it is transient and illusory. Like an actor storming and strutting about on the stage for a brief space of time, we go about this world full of bright hopes and cherished ambitions, all of which finally lead to nothing.

28. *Signifying nothing*—without any meaning or significance.

29. *Thou . . . tongue*—you come to report some news.

30. *Gracious my lord*—my gracious lord.

33. *Did stand my watch*—did perform my duty as a sentry.

34. *Anon* – presently.

35. *Endure*—suffer. *If 't be not so*—if what I say is not true.

36. *Within this three mile*—within three miles of this place.

39. *Next*—nearest.

40. *Till famine cling thee*—till hunger shrivels you up. *Sooth*– truth.

41. *Dost for me as much*—does the same to me, i.e. hang me alive on the next tree.

42. *I pull in resolution*—I begin to falter in my conviction.

44. *Lies like truth*—utters lies that might be mistaken for truth.

45. *Arm*—to arms ; take up your arms. *Out*—issue out against the enemy.

47. *Avouches*—affirms.

48. *Tarrying*—remaining.

49. *Aweary . . .sun*—tired of life.

50. *The estate . . . undone*—the whole structure of the world would go to ruins.

51. *Wrack*—wreck ; ruin.

52. *Harness*—armour. At least will die fighting like soldiers.

SCENE VI

Analysis of the Scene.

Now that they have almost reached the castle, Malcolm asks the soldiers to throw down their boughs and reveal themselves in their full numbers. He proposes that Siward and his son will lead the first division, and Macduff and be will be incharge of the rest. Macduff then orders the soldiers to sound their trumpets, those 'harbingers of blood and death,' full and loud.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

In this scene Malcolm reveals himself as a dignified

and able leader. There is the true ring of royal command in every utterance of his, and he seems quite confident of the success of the enterprise.

Notes and Explanations

1. *Now near enough*—now we are near enough. *Leavy*—leafy.

2. *Like those you are*—appears as you really are.

4. *Lead our first battle*—lead our main division. *Battle* division.

6. *According to our order*—according to our previous arrangement regarding the plan of battle.

7. *Do we but find*—if only we could find. *Tyrant's power*—Macbeth's forces.

8. Let them defeat us if we cannot fight properly with them.

9. *Make . . . speak*—let all our trumpets be sounded. *Breath*—voice.

10. *Clamorous harbingers*—noisy heralds. *Harbinger*—forerunner.

Scene VII

Analysis of the Scene.

Macbeth feels himself like a beast tied to a stake and harassed by dogs all round. One prediction has failed him; but he clings to the other that he shall not he killed by any man born of woman, more closely. He meets young Siward, who challenges him. They fight; and young Siward is killed.

Macduff meanwhile goes in quest of Macbeth. If Macbeth is killed by any other stroke than his the spirits of his slaughtered family would haunt him for ever. He hears a noisy tumult from one part of the field and hastens thither hoping to encounter Macbeth there.

Now Malcolm and Siward enter. The castle has surrendered and the victory has fallen to Malcolm.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

Once more in this scene the physical courage of Macbeth is exhibited. He fights now not like 'Bellona's bridegroom

lapp'd in proof,' but like a wild animal fighting for dear life.

Notes and Explanations

1. *They have . . . stake*—he is as helpless as a bear which is tied to a pole and worried by dogs on all sides. It has to defend itself as best as it could against the onslaught of the dogs; so also there is no other option for Macbeth but to fight against heavy odds.

Bear-baiting was a common sport in the Elizabethan age and the people, as a whole, took great delight in it.

2. *Bear like*—like a bear. *Fight the course*—stand the attack of my enemies. *What's he*—where is he?

6. *Hotter name* - a more dreadful name.

7. *Any is*—any that is.

9. *More fearful*—more dreaded by you.

10. *Abhorred*—hated.

12. *Smile at*—smile in derision.

13. *Brandished*—wielded.

16. *Still*—always.

17. *Kerns*—ordinary foot soldiers; infantry. *Wretched*—because they have been hired to fight for Macbeth.

18. *Staves*—lances.

19. *Unbatter'd edge*—undinted edges.

20. *Undeeded*—without using it for any soldierly act.

21. *Clatter*—tumult, din. *One of greatest note*—one of high repute.

22. *Bruited* - heralded; proclaimed. *More I beg not*—May fortune guide me to Macbeth. I do not ask any other favour of her.

24. *The castle's . . . render'd*—the castle has surrendered without a blow; peacefully surrendered.

25. *On both sides*—some have deserted Macbeth and joined the ranks of the enemy.

26. *The noble . . . war*—the noble thanes acquit themselves valiantly in the fight.

27. *Profess*—declare. Victory is almost declared in your favour, your victory is almost assured.

28. *And little else is to be done.*

29. *Strike beside us*—fight on our side.

SCENE VIII

Analysis of the Scene.

Macbeth is now alone. He would not use his sword against himself and play the 'Roman fool' ; he would rather use it against his enemies. While musing thus Macduff comes upon him and challenges him to fight. Macbeth tells Macduff that he was the last man he wanted to meet, his soul is already charged with the murder of his wife and children, and further, no man born of woman would be able to injure him in any way. At this Macduff rejoins that he is not born of woman, but untimely ripped from his mother's womb. Macbeth, however, would not stay to fight him. Macduff, driven to fury at this reply of the tyrant, tells him that if he refuses to fight, he would be captured and displayed to the public as a rare monster. Macbeth has no other alternative but to fight.

The battle is over. The lords assemble in another part of the field and take count of the missing. Macduff and Siward are not to be seen. Ross informs Old Siward how his son has died fighting with several wounds on his front and his father is happy to hear the news of the brave death of his son. Macduff now returns with the head of the usurper and hails Malcolm as king of Scotland ; and he asks his brother lords to do the same. Malcolm acknowledges their greetings, confers on them the title of earls, and invites one and all to his coronation ceremony at Scone.

Critical Comments on the Scene.

The scene gives us a promise of better things to come. We sympathise with the fate of the unhappy man, who would have made a brilliant name for himself if only his talents had been directed in the proper channels. He has become an exile from the land of happiness and honour, has sold his soul to the devil ; but he sees the hole he has dug for himself only when he actually falls headlong into it. He realises his folly only too late, and looks back with weary despondency on 'what might have been.'

Notes and Explanations

1. *Roman fool*—The reference is to the old custom of Roman generals who considered it a disgrace to accept defeat and often preferred to end their lives on the points of their own swords.

2. *Whiles*—as long as. *Gashes*—gaping wounds. *Do better upon them*—better fit them.

4. *Of all . . . thine*—Among all men I have been most careful to avoid you.

5. *Get back*—go back. *Charged*—burdened. This is the first indication of repentance that we get from Macbeth.

8. *Terms*—words. You are a bloodier villain than words are able to express. *Give thee out*—describe.

9. *As easy*—as easily. *Intrenchant air*—air incapable of being cut. *Trench*—cut.

10. *Impress*—make an impression or mark.

11. *Let fall*—allow to fall. *Crest*—the plume on the top of a helmet ; here it means head. *Vulnerable crest*—heads which are incapable of being wounded.

12. *Charmed life*—life protected by charm or magic. *Must not*—will not ; is not fated to.

13. *Depsite thy charm*—abandon your reliance in the strength of this charm.

14. *Angel*—Macbeth's case devil.

16. *Untimely ripped*—torn out before the proper time.

18. *Cowed*—terrified ; subdued.

My better part of man. (1) My courage which is the nobler part of my manhood. (2) Greater part of my natural courage.

19. *Juggling fiends*—deceiving devils. The jugglers by their clever tricks deceive the audience.

20. *Palter*—equivocate ; trifle.

20—23. They trifle with us by prophesies capable of a double interpretation. They keep up the words of the prophecy, but never the spirit of it.

22. *To our hopes*—concerning our hopes.

24. *Show*—thing to be shown. *Time*—world.

26. *Under writ*—written under. cf. the drunken sailor's comment on the personal appearance of Caliban in *The Tempest.* 'A strange fish; were I in England now, as once I was, and, but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver; there would this monster make man; any strange beast there makes a man; when they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.'

28. *To kiss*—to bow down; prostrate.

29. *Baited*—tormented. *Rabble's curse*—the curse of the mob.

31. *Thou opposed . . . born*—opposed by you, a person not born of woman.

32. *Try the last*—make a last stand.

33. *Throw*—place. *Hold*—stop.

35. *I would*—I wish.

36. *Go off*—die; meet their death.

37. *So great a day*—so great a victory. *Cheaply bought*—purchases at such a cheap price, i.e. with such a limited sacrifice on our part.

39. *Soldier's debt*—the debt that a soldier owes; died fighting.

41. *Which*—manhood. *Prowess*—valour; gallantry. *Confessed*—established.

43. *Unshrinking position*—the position from which he never drew back an inch.

45. *Measured by his worth*—must not be felt in proportion to his merits.

46. *Before*—in front. It was considered honourable to receive wounds on the front. A wound on the back indicated that the person has made an attempt to run away from the field of battle.

47. *God's soldier*—he has met his death like a man and hence is with God.

48. *Fairer death*—more happy death.

50. *His knell is knolled*—his funeral bell is rung.

50. *He is worth more sorrow*—he deserves a more formal expression of grief ; his merits demand a display of more grief on our part.

52. *Parted*—departed ; died. *Well*—nobly. *Paid his score*—paid the debt he owed to life.

53. *Newer comfort*—news more discomforting than the previous one.

56. *The time is free*—the people are free from the yoke of the tyrant ; the day of freedom has dawned.

57. *Compassed with*—encircled by ; surrounded by. *The kingdom's pearl*—the flower of Scottish nobility.

58. *My salutation*—my greeting.

59. Whom I beg to greet you in a loud voice, along with me 'Hail, king of Scotland.' *Large expense*—large amount.

61. *Reckon*—settle accounts. *Several*—individual.

62. *And make us even with you*—i.e. by rewarding you adequately for your loyal services. *What's to do*—whatever else remains to be done.

65. *Would be . . . time*—should be done at the dawn of this new era.

67. *Fled*—fled from. *Watchful tyranny*—tyrant even on the alert to ensnare his subjects.

68. *Producing forth*—discovering and bringing to justice.

69. *Ministers*—agents. *Dead butcher*—Macbeth. *Fiend-like queen*—Lady Macbeth.

70. *Self and violent hands*—hands violent to self.

71. *What needful else*—anything else that is necessary.

72. *Calls upon us*—demands my consideration. *Grace of Grace*—favour of God. *In measure*—as is required. *Time and place*—at the proper time and place.

75. *At once*—all together ; collectively. *To such one*—to every one individually.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. What is the method of determining the date of a play of Shakespeare ? Illustrate from the case of Macbeth ?

Ans. There is no authentic record of the chronological order in which Shakespeare's plays were written and published, and hence it is difficult to give with any degree of certainty the dates of the several plays of Shakespeare. The chronological study of Shakespeare's plays was attempted for the first time by 19th century editors and we owe a great debt to them in this field of literary research. In the present day there is not much disagreement as to the general order of Shakespeare's works although critics differ in their opinions regarding certain plays : but these are only minor points. That a working order of investigation has been formed, is by itself a very great achievement.

The most important point to consider in the investigation of the date of composition of a Shakespearean play is the nature of the evidence available. There are two kinds of evidence to be had in this—External Evidence and Internal Evidence. The former is very important because it deals with facts, the latter very often is only the result of conjectures and speculations. We might hit the target right in the centre or might even totally miss it. External Evidence generally consists of :—

(1) The entries in the register of the Stationers' company, either prior to, or on the publication of Shakespeare's plays.

(2) The mention of Shakespeare's plays in contemporary books or records, e.g., the diary of Henslowe, the famous theatrical manager, Francis Meris Palladis Tamia, Dr. Simon Forman's diary, etc.

Internal Evidence cannot fix the date of any given play, but to a great extent helps to fix the order of the plays in a way, especially where it comes to a question of style and diction the impressions created on the mind of the

reader are widely different No two sensitive minds think alike with the natural result that the impressions formed are often different. Internal Evidence includes :

(i) References in the play of contemporary events and persons.

(ii) The style and diction test.

(iii) A general study of the thought and matter of the play.

Examining *Macbeth* in the light of these tests we have to conclude that the play was composed between the years 1604 and 1610. Dr. Simon Forman gives in his diary an analysis of the play of *Macbeth*, which he saw enacted at the Globe Theatre, in 1610. A history of Macbeth is found in Waraner's Albion's England published in 1606. Some critics find certain points of resemblance between Shakespeare's "Macbeth" and Middleton's "The Puritan" (1606). The External Evidence suggests that the play could not have been written before 1610.

Several pieces of Internal Evidence have been cited. The Porter's speech is supposed to be full of allusions to contemporary events. The equivocator who could 'swear in both the scales against either scale' is commonly supposed to be a reference to the Jesuit 'Garnet', who was tried for treason and condemned in 1606. The 'farmer who hanged himself on the expectation of plenty' might have been suggested by the abundant harvest of the year 1696. Still another External Evidence is the reference to the coronation of James I in 1603.

Thus a careful examination of the play would convince uu that its date cannot be determined with absolute precision. But it can be said without the fear of contradiction that the play was composed between the years 1604 and 1610, and this point is further corroborated by the metrical tests of the play.

Q. 2. Discuss Shakespeare's deviations from Holinshed's narration in Macbeth. How does the play gain from these departures ?

Ans. The deviations from Holinshed would fall into two main groups; deviations in incident, and deviations in character. Under the first the following points may be noted :—

(*i*) The three different incidents, the revolt of Macdonwald, the invasion of Sweno, and the attack of Canute are rolled, as it were, into one by Shakespeare.

(*ii*) According to Holinshed Macdonwald kills himself. Shakespeare makes Macbeth kill him.

(*iii*) Shakespeare deviates from Holinshed when he makes the murder of Banquo take place prior to the banquet.

The important deviations in characterisation are :—

(*i*) The character of Macbeth darkened.

(*ii*) The character of Duncan set forth in bright colours.

(*iii*) Banquo wholly kept away from the crime. In Holinshed he is actually an accomplice of Macbeth.

The student should carefully stress on the necessity of these deviations and the happy effects produced. Duncan should be made a noble and gracious king to make the crime of Macbeth all the more heinous. The deviation in the character of Macbeth is also effected for the same purpose. Banquo is strictly kept out of the murder, because the play is partly a royal compliment and Shakespeare could not make the traditional ancestor of King James I a common, base accomplice in crime.

For more elaborate discussion see page 21 of Introduction under 'Sources of Macbeth.'

Q. 3. Explain with special reference to Macbeth how Shakespeare selects and modifies materials found in history or legend in order to obtain the maximum dramatic effect.

Ans. See answer to the previous question and Introduction under heading 'Sources of the Play.'

Q 4. How does Shakespeare, contrive to enlist our sympathies for Macbeth, who to all intents and purposes, is a villain ? Discuss.

Ans. Macbeth seems to be a villain because the seed of evil is already in his composition. He did not aspire for the crown because of the prophecies of the witches. He did so only because the predictions brought to the surface certain vague and undefined desires and ambitions which till then had remained submerged in the depths of his heart. When once he is started on the career of crime there is no checking him. He proceeds from crime to crime, without any 'compunctious visitings of nature and in course of time becomes a settled and hardened criminal revelling in crime and bloodshed. He becomes the regular savage with his inordinate lust for bloodshed.

But, still, Macbeth is not a villain, because he is not a born-criminal, like Iago. He is not strictly a murderer, although circumstances have made him one. He has several good and noble qualities which the ordinary common criminal does not have. Macbeth is a brave soldier, a born leader and every inch an aristocrat. There is only one flaw in his character and that is his boundless ambition. And it is his unrestrained ambition that leads him to his doom. This lust for position and power, however contemptible it might be, especially in such a person as Macbeth, still is something which we see everyday in the world and can understand with sympathetic tolerance. Macbeth has become the victim of one important weakness in his character and we are not even for one moment tempted to sit in judgment over him. Thus Macbeth holds the sympathy of the audience because he is not a born criminal. Setting aside this single weakness of his nature he is a man of brilliant parts, and, therefore, his fall is a tragedy in the fullest Shakespearian sense.

Besides, we have the feeling that perhaps Macbeth, left to himself, would not have committed such a bloody deed. For one brief moment the better parts of his nature prevail when he considers within himself the sacred laws of hospitality and loyalty which bind him to the king. But all

these good thoughts disappear for ever with the arrival o Lady Macbeth who lashes him into action with the spiri of her words. So throughout Macbeth holds interest and sympathy of the audience and this is lightened when ir the last Macbeth with a weary sigh thinks of 'what might have been'. See Introduction on page 80 under "His final change of outlook", where this change of outlook is fully discussed.

Q. 5. Discuss some of the ways in which Shakespeare manages to retain a certain amount of sympathy for Macbeth, despite his crimes.

Ans. See answer to the previous question. How could Shakespeare make us sympathise with a common murderer? The following points should be noted in answering this question :—

(*i*) Shakespeare makes the audience feel that Macbeth is a great man, who has fallen down from his high pedestal owing to one main weakness in his character.

(*ii*) Makes Macbeth a brave and victorious general and thus wins our admiration for him.

(*iii*) Macbeth is drawn to the deed, much, against his will, by the persuasions, of his wife which, owing to the weakness of his nature, he could not resist.

(*iv*) He has fallen a prey to his ambition, and ambition 'is the last infirmity of noble minds'.

(*v*) The dignity of the diction also, to a certain extent, contributes this efiect.

(*vi*) Macbeth does the deed under a fatal hallucination, a dreadful mistake.

(*vii*) His final change of outlook gives us the impression of a solitary, forlorn soul, and this makes us pity him and sympathise with his sad lot. The feeling is created in us that, given the proper turn, his good and noble qualities could have been used for the highest purposes.

Q. 6. Shakespeare in Macbeth has concentrated more on atmosphere than on character. Discuss.

Ans. Unlike his other tragedies, in Macbeth, Shakespeare seems to concentrate more on the building up of an atmosphere than on delineation of character. It does not mean that there is no characterization in Macbeth. Indeed

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth rank very high among his character-portaits, yet it is true that in no play there is such a brooding and dominant atmosphere as in Macbeth.

The general effect created in the play is one of terror and awe, terror which is the outcome of a stricken conscience, and awe inspired by the prediction and loathsome rites of the supernatural. This atmosphere of gloom and desolation, bloodshed and horror, which characterises this play and differentiates it from the other tragedies, is produced by a series of touches all of which serve to raise the play out of the plane of the ordinary to one peculiarly its own.

1. Extreme gloom and darkness brood over the whole tragedy. All the events of the play take place during the nights. Every word in it suggests a sort of pending doom "The raven itself is hoarse" announcing the "fatal entrance of Duncan" in the castle. All the characters invoke the aid of night. Lady Macbeth wants "thick night", to cover itself "in the dunnest smoke of hell", so that her "keen knife see not the wound it makes." The deeds are done when

"Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtain'd sleep; Witchcraft celebretes
Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murderer
Alarm'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
Moves like a ghost."

The dagger of the air descends in the dead of night before "the heat-oppressed brain" of Macbeth.

"The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
Now spurs the lated travellers space
To gain the timely inn"

when Banquo is treacherously set upon and ruthlessly cut down.

Thus the atmosphere of the play is one of gloom and dread. The still landscape disturbed only by the croaking of the raven or the screech of the owl, the forbidding sky overcast so that "dark night strangles the travelling lamp", the falcon "hawk'd and kill'd" by the "mousing owl," all

these infest the play with a sense of darkness, we may even say blackness !

2. But this impenetrable blackness of night is not totally unrelieved. Often and again we get visions of blood entering the stage and departing from it. The murky 'collied' background is broken here and there by colour, the colour of blood. The dagger of the air hanging before Macbeth's eye is covered with 'gouts of blood', the grooms are dabbed with the old king's blood ; Banquo appears before the company with "twenty trenched gashes on his head", his bones are marrowless, his blood is cold, their is no sight in his eyes and shakes his 'gory locks' at Macbeth.

Lady Macbeth in her mental breakdown cannot stand the smell and sight of blood. The dark spot cannot be erased from her hand, and "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten her little hand." Under the reign of the heartless tyrant the poor country is almost afraid to know itself, "sighs and groans and shrieks that rent the air are made, not marked ; violent sorrow seems a modern ecstasy",

'the poor country bleeds,
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds."

3. The violence of some of the imagery also contributes to this atmosphere. Lady Macbeth would not hesitate to murder Duncan. Her wild words

"I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me :
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, and I so sworn as you
Have done to this",

by their very vividness and magnitude, strike in us an unconscious note of awe and terror. Addressing the unknown forces that guide the actions of humanity she exclaims,

"Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, ensure me here
And fill me, from the crown to the toe. top-ful
Of direst cruelty ! make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse.

That no compunctions, visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose; nor keep pace between
The effect and it I come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall."

"In its language, as in its action the drama is full of tumult and storm. Whenever the witches are present, we see and hear a thunder storm: when they are absent, we hear of shipwrecking storms and dreadful thunders; of tempests that blow down trees and churches, castles, palaces, and pyramids. Now, all these agencies......darkness, the lights and colours that illuminate it, the storm that rushes through it, the violent and gigantic images......conspire with the appearance of the witches and the ghost to awaken horror, and in some degree also a supernatural dread."

Q. 7. Is Macbeth a 'Tragedy of Destiny' or a 'Tragedy of Character'? Do you attribute Macbeth's downfall to fate, or to a weakness in himself?

Ans. The tragedy is essentially one of character because the fall of Macbeth is entirely due to a weakness in his own nature. Macbeth is brave and bold, but at the same time he is also inordinately ambitious. His ambition is a very prominent part of his nature and it throws into complete insignificance every other emotion in him. The predictions of the witches make him start, not because the prophetic utterances are in any way foreign to his thoughts, rather it is the start of a guilty man who has been suddenly surprised when some other person expresses the innermost thoughts of his own mind. We find that the seed of evil is already in his composition. The thought of the murder of Duncan had entered his mind on more than one occasion previously, although it had not been given any concrete shape as yet. So the instruments of fate or destiny are not directly responsible for the crime; Macbeth has become a murderer only because of his limitless ambition.

Another prominent defect in his character is his weakness of will. Even after the prediction of the witches, while meditating on the contemplated murder in a room in his own castle, for a brief moment the better part of his nature almost

triumphs over his weaker nature : but that is only for a very brief space of time indeed. He considers within himself the sacred laws of hospitality. As a host, it is his duty to guard Duncan against the knife of the murderer and not be one himself. Moreover, he is his kinsman, and has conferred on him recently several honours. No, he will not do the deed. It is then that Lady Macbeth makes her entrance ; and Macbeth tells her his final decision not to proceed any further in the business. But Lady Macbeth has her own plans and schemes for her husband. She makes a vehement effort to change his decision ; she appeals to his love for her ; she appeals to his sense of manhood. And finally she reproaches him with cowardice. Now this is something which Macbeth, the hero of several engagements cannot stand. He falls a victim to Lady Macbeth's persuasions. If Macbeth had a little more strength of will, surely he would not have been led to a career of bloodshed and crime. He would have strongly resisted the taunts and reproaches of Lady Macbeth and used his brilliant parts for nobler purposes.

This view of the tragedy of Macbeth is heightened if we note carefully certain limitations in the powers of the witches. The witches can exercise their power only on such people as have renounced God, because their influences are mainly derived from Satan. The Second Witch cannot completely bring to destruction the sailor who had sailed to Aleppo, because his wife is evidently a devout woman. And if Macbeth has reached a stage when he has ceased to have any faith in God, and this has led him to his doom, most certainly we cannot attribute his fall to the powers of destiny or fate.

Q. 8. Does the play of "Macbeth" illustrate the inevitability of fate ? Discuss.

Ans. See page 41 of Introduction, under "Struggle in Macbeth's Mind before the Crime."

Q. 9. To what extent is Macbeth responsible for his own acts ? Do you think he has been led to his doom by the influence of the supernatural over which he has no control ?

Ans. For answer, see page 40 of Introduction under "'Nature or Source of the Tragedy in Macbeth."

Q. 10. Consider the struggle in Macbeth's soul between good and evil powers and discuss how the responsibility for his downfall rests on his own weakness of character ?

Macbeth is ambitious and in his ambition lie deeply embedded germs of sin that wait for favourable opportunities to burst into life.

Ambition held before him the glittering crown of Scotland, and perhaps he had in the past talked to his wife about removing Duncan. The idea has remained dormant in his mind, and that is why he starts when the witches hail him as the future king of Scotland. Besides ambition, there is another very potent faculty in his nature—imagination. As soon as the witches play upon his ambition, his imagination is set to work, and calls up a picture of murder that appals him and shakes his whole being. His nature revolts against murder, and yet he is driven to it. This is the tragedy of Macbeth.

Why does Macbeth commit murder, if his nature abhors it ? The original motive that urges him is no doubt his ambition, but his ambition comes in conflict with his conscience that works through his imagination. It must be understood at the very outset that Macbeth's imagination is a powerful force on the side of good ; it is the handmaid of his conscience. When his conscience admonishes or warns, it does not work directly ; it works through his imagination ; for instance, when his conscience warns him against murder, it operates through his imagination. "The horrid image, unfixing his hair" is nothing but the voice of his conscience, expressing itself through his imagination ; the air-drawn dagger marked with gouts of blood, the terrible voice ringing in his ear after the murder—"Macbeth does murder sleep" —are the terrible warnings of his conscience, transmitted through his imagination.

His ambition thus comes in conflict with his imagination which may be called his "pictorial conscience". Again, because he is imaginative, he is inclined to superstition and

is therefore deeply influenced by the supernatural predictions. Thus his imagination, on the one hand, deters him from the crime by calling up appalling pictures, and on the other, makes him a prey to supernatural soliciting and arouses criminal thoughts in his mind. Macbeth is thus a victim of conflicting emotions, which constitutes the greatest weakness of his character.

When Macbeth's mind is shaken in this way, Duncan nominates Malcolm as his heir, who becomes the guest of Macbeth. Lady Macbenth, who is as ambitious as her husband, arrives at a quick decision and brings all the resources of her mind and heart to bear upon the weak mind of Macbeth. His imagination is again active and holds him back from the contemplated crime; his conscience working through his imagination, presents to him the horror and vileness of the deed in all its vividness. "No," he says, "we will proceed no further in this business". But he is weak, and cannot hold out against his wife's determination". But he is weak, and cannot hold out against his wife's determination. Just before the crime, his imagination again warns him by calling up the horrible image of the dagger, but Macbeth, almost mad with horror, disregards this last warning. The deed is done—but without any enthusiasm, or without any sense of glory—done, "as if it were an appalling duty, and the instant it is finished, its futility is revealed before." (*Bradley*). His conscience revolts again, and makes itself heard in a tremendous language, that has no parallel elsewhere in literature:

"Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep"
Glamis hath murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more.

The terrible voice of his conscience proves too true. Macbeth becomes king, but he never sleeps again. "Macbeth is henceforth separated from the whole of his world, except from his comrade in the murder. He is isolated also from his earlier self; he is an outlaw to himself". He is now haunted by a sense of insecurity and fear of vengeance. To make himself secure, he gets Banquo murdered; he thought he would get peace after the death of Banquo, but

"instead of peace descending on him, from the depths of his nature, his half-murdered conscience rises; his deed confronts him in the apparition of Banquo's ghost, and the horror of the night of his first murder returns." (*Bradley*).

Q. 11. Describe the Elizabethan ideas and beliefs on the subject of witchcraft. Discuss Shakespeare's conception of the witches and point out how his witches differ from those of popular tradition.

Ans. See Introduction: on page 50 under "Ghost and witches".

Q. 12. Discuss the dramatic importance of the supernatural in Macbeth.

Ans. See Introduction on pages 52 from para second to page 55, first paragraph.

Q. 13. In what respects do the witches of Shakespeare seem to have a symbolic character?

Ans. Shakespeare's witches are not merely the witches of popular tradition; they are something more. They are the weird sisters of Scandinavian mythology and have a definite symbolic character. They are instruments of darkness, powers of evil and possess more than mortal knowledge. As Banquo points out 'to keep up their predictions in small matters and betray men in matters of the deepest moment'. To revel in gruesome rites is their favourite occupation, and to bring a soul to unhappiness and misery is the greatest joy for them. In fact they are not living forms at all, but only symbols of evil and wickedness, a visible embodiment of ruin and confusion. They are only the evil powers of the world and the direct agents of destuction masquerading as witches, luring men to evil and gloating over their miseries.

Q. 14. What do you understand by Dramatic Relief? Give instances of it from Macbeth.

Ans. See Introduction under Dramatic Relief on page 69 and the critical comments on the porter scene on page 265. Give in the first paragraph a definition of dramatic relief and point out how this device of sudden contrast of

emotion and atmosphere is an important dramatic weapon with Shakespeare.

Q. 15. What is Dramatic Irony? Illustrate from Macbeth.

Ans. See Introduction under Dramatic Irony on page 68.

Q. 16. What is Poetic Justice? Illustrate by reference to the play.

Ans. See Introduction: page 71 where this topic has been discussed in detail.

Q. 17. How far do you think, is Banquo innocent?

Ans To prove Banquo's innocence it is necessary to study his immediate reaction to the prediction of the witches step by step. At the prediction of the witches in the third scene of the first Act Banquo is only surprised and bewildered, and not profoundly agitated by it like Macbeth, because he does not give the matter any serious thought. In him we notice only curiosity which any other man will have in the same circumstances, but it is nothing more. Even when the prophetic utterances of the witches are partially fulfilled with the entrance of the lords, Banquo is overcome for the time being, but it ends there. Noticing the visible agitation of Macbeth, he even warns him of the danger of taking the words of the witches too seriously, for, it may even make him aspire for the crown instead of being satisfied with the thaneship of Cawdor.

Banquo feels the effect of the words of the witches later in the castle of Macbeth when his sleep is disturbed during the nights by wicked thoughts. But being bold and honest by nature he curbs his own thought and frankly discusses it with Macbeth. All critics are unanimous in the opinion that till this time Banquo has been thoroughly honest and noble and wholly innocent. The behaviour of Banquo after the murder of Duncan is, indeed, questionable, and has been subjected to a series of criticisms. He is the only man who knows about the temptations of Macbeth, but although his suspicions are aroused he does not utter them to any of the assembled lords.

When we see him again in the third Act we find that he has actually acquiesced to the succession of Macbeth. His soliloquy here again shows that the thoughts of private gain have entered his mind here also. On these grounds it has been often alleged that Banquo is not the innocent soul he is often depicted to be. but after the coronation of Macbeth is actually an accomplice of his.

Several arguments may be put forward against this interpretation of Banquo's character. It is true that he calmly submits to Macbeth's coronation, but what else could he do in the circumstances ? Macbeth is powerful ; he is all in all. Possibly Banquo has only submitted to the inevitable. It would be a great mistake to suppose that his acts are guided by hopes of private gains. No, Banquo is far too noble for that, and such an act would be quite inconsistent with his character as far as we have studied it. Prof. Bradley pitches upon one single utterance of his 'Hush, no more', and argues with vehemence that this is surely an evidence of the decline of his character. Most certainly, no. 'Hush no more' is not occasioned by the entrance of the royal couple. As once he had checked his wicked thoughts in Macbeth's castle, so he is doing now. It is not the outcome of the fear of detection by Macbeth and Lady Macbeth ; it is, on the other hand, his dislike of the flight of his own morbid thoughts.

We have already discovered how the play is partly a royal compliment, and if we are correct in this surmise, that itself would be the main proof to establish the innocence of Banquo. It is quite unlikely that Shakespeare would make Banquo, the traditional ancestor of King James I, the then reigning king, an accomplice of Macbeth in crime.

Q. 18. What is the significance of the Porter Scene ? Comment on its genuineness.

Ans. The brief interval of the Porter scene provides relief after the terrible tension of the preceding scene. Some critics (including Coleridge doubt the authenticity of the scene ; but Hales emphatically declares it to be genuine for the following reasons: (1) It is an integral part of the play. (2) It is necessary as a relief to the surrounding horror :

monotony of horror cannot be sustained ; the sound of a fresh voice after we have listened so long to that guilty conference is a very cordial change ; (3) Some lighter speech is necessary according to the law of contrast elsewhere obeyed by Shakespeare. (4) The speech of the Porter is dramatically relevant. The whole speech is in fact a powerful piece of irony. 'If a man were porter of hell-gate'—but is this man not so ? What then is hell ? And where are its gates ? (5) The style and language of the Porter's speech are Shakespearean.

"Dramatically considered, the whole scene down to the entrance of Macbeth lowers the pitch of the last scene wisely. It enables Shakespeare to climb easily and with gradation, through the heightening description of the storm of the night, to another climax—the great scene of the discovery of the murder of Duncan."

The charge that the style of the passage is coarse and un-Shakespearean cannot stand because there are several critics who hold exactly the opposite view. The style and language are unmistakably Shakespearean. The primrose way to the 'everlasting bonfire' is a typically Shakespearean coinage.

The scene is highly necessary from an artistic point of view and no one except Shakespeare could have managed it so well. The porter scene gives the proper delay between the deed and the discovery and to a great extent relieves the intense strain on the mind of the audience. It gives the proper relief to the gruesome tragedy that had been enacted in the previous scene and, therefore, is a product of the finest artistic sense. We are taken back to the normal everyday working world from this atmosphere of horror.

According to Chambers this emotional contrast is a highly necessary part of the Elizabethan drama which is an 'incongruous medley of high and low, of light and dark, of laughter and tears'. Hales points out : 'The Porter's speech is dramatically relevant ; it is a powerful piece of irony without which the play would be the poorer.'

It is quite impossible to agree with the suggestion that this speech is an interpolation and un-Shakespearean in the face of all this evidence.

Q. 19. Does the introduction of the comic dialogue of the porter into the most tragic scene of Macbeth constitute a weakness in the play? Discuss in detail.

Ans. See answer to question 18.

Q. 20. Trace the gradual loss of strength of character in Lady Macbeth. Discuss its significance.

Ans. Lady Macbeth from her very first appearance on the stage impresses us with the strength of her character. She is not irresolute like her husband. The moment she receives the letter of her husband, she weaves her schemes for him and everything must take place according to her schemes. The main thing is the realisation of her husband's ambitions, and every obstacle must fall before it. A life or two does not matter as long as they are able to achieve their ends. She seems to be almost an inhuman, every inch a fiend-like queen as Malcolm calls her.

But this is only a superficial study of her character. Even in these early stages there are certain points which clearly indicate that her power is the strength of her will, that her character is the result of her strong will disciplining and thoroughly subjecting to it every ordinary emotion in her. She appears callous not because the usual womanly instincts are wanting in her. They are in her but have been repressed and controlled by her disciplined mind. But Lady Macbeth makes one fatal mistake; she relies too absolutely on her will, with the natural result that it breaks down under the severe strain put on it. She is a striking contrast to her husband inasmuch as she is lacking in imagination; Macbeth can conceive things in his mind before they actually take place. To Lady Macbeth this is something impossible; she realises the full nature of their bloody deed only when she actually confronts it.

Lady Macbeth is, indeed, very prominent in the First Act when she goads her wavering husband into action with her fiery speech. The first time we realise the loss of strength of

character in her is when her husband goes to Duncan's chamber to commit the murder. She has strengthened herself with wine, but still, the least sound startles her. She is afraid that Macbeth is detected in the crime and dreads the consequences. When Macbeth returns shouting hysterically after the murder through sheer power of will she rallies herself, and even ventures into Duncan's room to replace the daggers which Macbeth in his excitement had carried away with him. And after returning she makes light of the whole matter.

This is, however, only a brave front assumed for the occasion by Lady Macbeth. Her real feminine nature revolts at the sight of blood. What she had failed to grasp owing to want of imagination previously, is now brought before her in all its grim reality. She reaches the stage when she cannot even stand on account of the gruesome tragedy ; she faints and has to be carried away.

In the Banquet scene she is calm and collected, and rises equal to the occasion when Macbeth forgets himself. But there is the note of despair and weariness in all her words. Gradually, and perhaps even unknown to herself, she slowly drifts away from her husband. She reveals herself with the spirit of the Lady Macbeth of the Second Act only once in the Third Act, and that is when she says about Banquo and Fleance : 'But in them nature's copy's not eterne'. On other occasions she is merely the passive and weary spectator and seems almost indifferent to what is taking place around her.

Thus when her final breakdown takes place in the Fifth Act we are not in the least surprised. Her turning faint in the Secoud Act does really anticipate her final collapse here in this scene. And what is it that preoccupies her mind even when it is deranged and unbalanced ? It is the thought of the murder. She can never erase from her vision the blood of the pitiful old man. The smell of blood haunts her even in her repose and she moans 'all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand'.

Q. 21. Malcolm characterises Macbeth as a 'butcher' and Lady Macbeth as a 'fiend'. Are these estimates just ?

Ans. See the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Q. 22. Give some passages from the play which have become familiar quotations.

Ans.

(1) 'What can the devil speak true ?' I. iii, 107.

(2) Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings. I. iii. 136-7.

(3) Time and the hour run through the roughest day I. iii. 146.

(4) There is no art.
To find the mind's construction in the face'. I. iv. 11.

(5) Too full o' the milk of human kindness. I. v. 11.

(6) The sleeping and the dead.
Are but as pictures. II. ii. 54

(7) After life's fitful fever he sleeps well. III. ii. 23.

(8) Security
Is mortals' chiefest enemy. III. v. 83.

(9) Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell. IV. iii. 22.

(10) The night is long that never finds the day. IV. iii. 240.

(11) All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. V. i. 146.

(12) Life's but a walking shadow a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.
And then is heard no more : it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury.
Signifying nothing '. V. v. 24.

Q. 23. Enumerate the several varieties of form in which Shakespeare presents in his tragedies the agencies of other worldly phenomenon.

Ans. (The student is directed to note the matter given under the heading of "The use of the Supernatural in Macbeth" on page 49 for detailed discussion.)

The main varieties of form under which the other worldly powers are represented in Shakespeare's tragedies are four, namely :

(*a*) Ghosts and Witches.

(*b*) Fate and Destiny.
(*c*) Dramatic Irony.
(*d*) Pathetic Fallacy.

Q. 24. **"Character is not Destiny" in Shakespeare, says Professor Raleigh. What have you to say on this point stressed in the dramatic presentation of good and evil in a Shakespearian tragedy ?**

Ans. The remark quoted in the above question refers to the problem of good and evil found in the dramatic representation of these principles of life. Some people say that the tragic hero in a Shakespearian play is directly responsible for his own destiny which he is said to partly create and partly influence. Others take an opposite line of argument and assert that a Shakespearian hero is very much influenced by invisible forces which are outside his control altogether and, therefore, he is no longer to be held responsible for all he does and suffers. By such a statement we imply that character is not destiny—a statement which Professor Raleigh defends with much subtlety.

(This problem is discussed in detail under the heading of "The relation of Character to Destiny" on page 60 to which the student is referred.)

Q. 25. **More is left for the imagination of the audience in a Shakespearean drama than in modern plays. Explain the implications of such a remark with regard to the tragedies of Shakespeare.**

Ans. The remark made in the question refers to the technical devices which a playwright has to obey in order to give his audience that minimum of information as to the scene and setting of his drama without which the play may fall flat on the ears of the audience. It is with such a view and dramatic convention that a modern writer like Bernard Shaw gives very long and elaborate stage-directions in order to equip the minds of his readers with the requisite knowledge of the setting in which his play is put. But since a play is primarily intended to be staged and represented, and not merely to be read and discussed at leisure, these

directions have little significance on the stage itself. In this way a dramatist, of necessity, has to leave more to be imagined by the audience by giving them such hints and suggestions scattered in the dialogue of the characters themselves. It is this skill of both providing the necessary information, as well as not intruding too much upon the attention of the audience with regard to such hints, which is required in a good dramatist and Shakespeare possesses this to an admirable extent. He was, as we know, both an actor and a playwright, and he knew the technicalities of stage-craft and had enough theatrical experience to realise this point.

Now in a theatre such as that which Shakespeare's audience was acquainted with, the peculiarity was that it was innocent of those elaborate sceneries and stage-properties which we find only too efficiently present in a modern theatre. In other words the modern craft of the stage-manager and other theatrical experts is so efficient that the audience needs little or no imagination to exercise in the grasping or appreciation of the incidents and happenings presented in a play. This is so because the modern theatre is quite different from an Elizabethan theatre and since stage-craft has 'progressed' as any other craft to a point at which it dispenses altogether with the imaginative co-operation of the modern audience which is so necessary for a complete appreciation of the play.

Take, for example, the Globe Theatre in London in which Shakespeare's plays were represented. This was built in the shape of a wooden O. There was no scenery of any elaborate kind such as we have in modern theatres. And in order to acquaint the audience with what the scenery was, placards and notices were hung on the stage itself in order to tell the audience what kind of scene was presented in the particular situation. Such placards read: "This is a wood", "This is a seashore", "This is the Field of Bosworth" and so on! This kind of information, crude as it might appear to us with our realistic stage settings and scene-shiftings with which readers of "Punch" are comically acquainted, but there was one point of advantage in such

placards and that was that it left much for the imagination of the audience to fill in the gaps. Thus not only the minds and hearts of the audience but also the imaginations were exercised and the playwrights afforded a complete aesthetic experience to their audience. This was specially so in Shakespeare's plays where he had the sure instinct of a dramatist and as such exercised it for the purposes of his drama. This is why it is said that in a Shakespearean drama much more is left for the imagination of the audience than is done in a modern play.

Q. 26. Illustrate the means and method by which Shakespeare has tried to make dialogue instrumental in communicating to the audience the requisite information proper to a full appreciation of Macbeth.

Ans. We have seen in the answer to Question 25, how Shakespeare was compelled by stage considerations to leave much for the imagination of the audience in the understanding and appreciation of his dramas. We have here to see how the general principles of Shakespeare under such conditions of the theatre and the stage are practised by him in detail in the tragedy of *Macbeth*. By a close study of the evidence of dialogue in the scenes of *Macbeth* we will be able to see this principle practised by Shakespeare. It must be noted that in *Macbeth* the whole spirit of the tragedy is entirely dependent upon our understanding of the importance implied in the dialogue of the characters which, at a first glance, might not appear to be important.

In the opening scene of *Macbeth* the audience is given just enough information to anticipate the entry of Macbeth on the heath where he will thus meet with the weird sisters by whom he is so much further to be influenced. In the second scene we are told what the position of Macbeth is, we are informed by an economic use of dramatic dialogue that Banquo and Macbeth have won a fierce battle and that they are going to offer their loyalty to Duncan, their king. This we are told by the words of both these. The words of Duncan himself then inform us how he sends Ross to honour Macbeth by conferring upon him the title of Thane of Cawdor. Next in the

third scene the meeting of the witches and Macbeth takes place. It should be noted here how deftly the scene is handled by Shakespeare. Macbeth we see standing 'rapt' and lost in the meaning of the words of the witches. We begin to doubt whether Macbeth is really surprised by the prophecies of the witches or not. As if to relieve us of this doubt and to let us enter into the psychology of Macbeth at this moment, we find Ross (whom we had seen earlier ordered by Duncan to greet Macbeth) coming to Macbeth and honouring him on behalf of the king with the Thaneship of Cawdor. We are now no longer under suspense as to the course of thought surging in the mind of Macbeth. The words of Ross which are quite natural made to confirm the words of the witches which are intended to seem supernatural. Macbeth now fully gives himself to the influence of the prophecy and we know he is indulging in thoughts of murdering Duncan. In the fourth scene Duncan and Macbeth meet and we are told that Duncan is going to be the royal guest at his general's castle. This scene is immediately followed by the scene where Lady Macbeth appears reading a letter, and while she reads and talks we know that both husband and wife have already discussed this possibility of murdering Duncan. Further when Macbeth meets his wife in the same we come to know that there were many letters of this kind between them.

In this way Shakespeare handles dramatic dialogue to suggest the course of actions inferred to be happening behind the scenes. We are made aware of the fact that the reason of Macbeth's standing 'rapt' by the prophecies of the witches is due not to the fact that he thinks these words new and novel to him, but because the words of the witches are old already in the sense that he had formerly been actually thinking of the murder of Duncan which is suggested in the prophecy of the witches. Macbeth is surprised as a guilty conscience would be surprised when it is openly revealed by someone to the world at large. He is 'rapt' because he thought he and Lady Macbeth alone knew of the talk of murdering Duncan, but here he finds that the witches have already revealed his own inner

thoughts. It is this fact that makes Macbeth believe in all the words of the weird sisters with what result we all know. Such, in short, is the deft handling of dialogue in the tragedy of *Macbeth*.

Q. 27. Write a note on Shakespeare's villains and briefly indicate how the hero of Macbeth is one of them.

Ans. It may be noted in general that Shakespeare's handling of villains is different from that of other dramatists. The peculiarity of his villains is that he does not make them complete, irredeemable blackguards who appear in the dramas of lesser writers. Shakespeare always gives a touch of humanity to his picture of villains however apparently outrageous their actions are portrayed on the stage. The truth and wisdom of doing this will be seen when we remember that human nature cannot be painted in absolute colours of black or white, but that it is a strange mixing of many tones and undertones of mixed motives and subconscious desires. Modern psychology has been anticipated by Shakespeare by almost three hundred years for we know that he is right in the light of the new psychology of today. An example will do to show the truth of this. In the character of Shylock in the play of *The Merchant of Venice* we find the villain painted by Shakespeare in mixed colours. This is all the more surprising because Shylock is a Jew and the Elizabethan audience had not any very great sympathy for Jews, no more, in fact, than the Nazis had in the Germany of Hitler. But even when painting the character of a Jew, Shakespeare has not made him an irredeemable villain. A human touch is added when we see Shylock lamenting and cursing his spendthrift daughter, Jessica, who, he has been told, sold a ring in exchange for a monkey! Poor Shylock was naturally shocked, not merely because a ring is more valuable to him (we must remember his love of gold) than a monkey but (and here is the human touch that the dramatist has given to his figure) because that particular ring was his own wedding ring given by his wife, Leah. That is why he laments, hard-hearted and inhuman though his actions may seem to us when he appears in public. In private life Shylock is

not a villain but has all the virtues of an ordinary citizen. And we know that he is true to life when he exclaims :

"I would not have parted with it (the ring) for a wilderness of monkeys!"

And so in *Macbeth*. (Here the student should add the notes referred to under the section entitled "The Villain as Hero in Macbeth" on page 37 of Introduction.)

Q. 28. Which of the tragic emotions predominate in the impression gathered from the witnessing of the play of "Macbeth"—pity for the hero, or terror?

Ans. If the imprssion left on our minds after witnessing or reading *Macbeth* were one of sheer terror at the black deeds of slaughter which the hero perpetrates on the stage and behind it, the play would not be a real Shakespearean tragedy at all. This is so because in a real Shakespearean tragedy the requisite feelings and emotions left on the mind of the audience are those of pity and terror combined. This has been followed by Shakespeare in all his tragedies. In the tragedy of *Macbeth* for instance, we are shown how the horrors of Macbeth's deeds are toned down to a point where we feel less terror and more of pity towards the hero.

(For fuller details of the answer the student is referred to the section entitled "The Villain as Hero in Macbeth" of the Introduction on page 37.)

Q. 29. What is the relation of prose and verse as media of dramatic language employed by Shakespeare in his plays?

(i) *Blank Verse.*—This is used in Shakespeare's plays to give expression to poetic feelings and passions such as those of love, melancholy, and so forth. It is also commonly used when the characters speaking the lines are noble and royal persons, whose language, therefore, must suit the high and exalted position that they are privileged to occupy.

(ii) *Rhymed Verse.*—This is used as an effective ending of a scene. When, for example, the scene is not changed or it is not easy for the audience to note the end of any

scene, rhymed lines come handy with their clinching sense and effective termination, particularly when the previous lines in the scene are in unrhymed verse. Thus as a contrast with blank verse, the rhymed lines appear handy in intimating that a particular scene in a play is ended.

Another use of the rhymed verse, as pointed out by Abbott, is to mark an aside (that is to say, when characters on the stage say something which is intended to be heard, not by the other characters of the play but by the audience).

(iii) *Prose.*—Generally speaking prose is used by Shakespeare as a relief from blank verse ; and since blank verse is used for situations that are serious and tragic, it naturally follows that the change from verse to prose also denotes the reliefs from the tragic to the comic situations in a play. Hence it may be said that as a rule in Shakespeare prose is used for comic scenes and for lighter, not serious purposes. Accordingly the speakers of prose language (not, of course, prosaic language) are belonging to a class of society which is inferior to that of those who speak in blank verse (that is to say, kings and nobles and the like). Prose, then, is used by the minor characters.

Prose is also used for letters (see Lady Macbeth reading the letter of her husband in the first Act).

Whenever there is a necessity to change the dramatic pitch, prose, again, is used.

Finally, prose is used to express some aberrations from the normal human nature, such as frenzy, insanity and the like.

Q. 30. Point out the moral indicated in the tragedy of "Macbeth".

Ans. Since all art worth the name is, as a Frenchman put it, life seen through a temperament, Dramatic art cannot handle reality without shaping it in the mental and moral mould of the dramatist. It is that mould which gives its peculiar shape to a tragedy. And the moral of it all is simply the lineament of the mould. Shakespeare's heart and imagi-

nation worked in a peculiar fashion in the writing of *Macbeth* and to understand that fashion and form is to imbibe the moral and instruction implied therein. Every tragedy of Shakespeare points to a particular reading of the facts of life viewed through a dramatic imagination. In *Hamlet*, he showed us what the reactions of an idealist to the life surrounding him are ; in *King Lear*, he has told us what an inapt reading of individual character might bring on the head of the particular reader of life ; in *Othello* he has displayed the results of an unintellectual appreciation of a situation which demanded an intellectual ability to grasp it aright. And so in *Macbeth* he once again shows us the results of an ambitious temperament yielding to the temptations of the Devil. This, to put it briefly, is the moral of the play. Let us, however, see what it all suggests.

We must not imagine that the tragedy of *Macbeth* consists in the frustration of his political ambition. For the ambition only too fully fulfilled itself. Macbeth did become the king of Scotland which was his greatest political ambition. Where, then, does his tragedy lie ? The answer is that Macbeth fails to get just those things of life which he imagined would be his, if only he could nerve himself up for the murdering of his royal master. Those things were not merely political power and royal prerogatives but love, honour, obedience and friendship and these we know he never could get. The irony of his fate is that he is denied the very things on which he set his heart as worth possessing. And it is his realisation of his failure to obtain these objects that makes Macbeth burst out into lyrical utterance in those famous lines wherein he says that life signifies nothing. What more tragic could happen to a man than that life should cease to have any meaning or significance to him ? We live in life because it has some meaning to us, some interest and hope for us which nerve us to put up with all its obvious dangers and difficulties. As soon as we lose interest in life we are dead to all practical purposes although we may breathe and move. The terrible lesson ravealed in the story of Macbeth is that man is responsible for his own destiny and that he makes or mars his own happiness by his own deeds or misdeeds.

Such a lesson is called the working of Nemesis—that inevitable outcome of one's own deeds of which one nevertheless was unaware. We reap what we sow. We cannot sow weeds and expect roses to bloom. Man creates his own destiny, at any rate, he shapes it in the form in which he gets it. Macbeth stands condemned of a moral weakness which blurred his conscience and made him an easy and willing victim to supernatural forebodings. Shakespeare does not want us to believe that Macbeth was misled by outside agencies. That sort of argument would make us the helpless puppets of a mocking fate. This is not his implication when he makes Macbeth seemingly obey the disreputable injunctions of the witches and other supernatural agencies. The outside agencies could never create any evil in the mind of man, they will only strengthen and supplement what is already there in man. And so Macbeth was influenced by the evil agencies simply because his own guilty conscience lent itself easily to supernatural promptings of evil. Such is the implication of Macbeth's story as dramatised by Shakespeare.

The moral obviously is that if we set about trying to obtain the good things of life by bad means we never succeed. Macbeth's wish to gain political influence, honour, obedience and friends is by itself a very natural and human wish, but his fault is that he endeavours to encompass those worthy objects in an unworthy manner. One never gets good by resorting to evil; evil can only produce more evil. The story of Macbeth illustrates the truth of this remark. This is the lesson it teaches, the moral it indicates. One could never escape from the consequences of one's own actions, good, bad or indifferent. If this were all, there would have been nothing more in *Macbeth* than the dramatisation of a commonplace principle recognised as the standard of average human conduct. But *Macbeth* does something more than this. Not only is it indicated that man stands himself condemned or complimented by his evil or good deeds, for there would be nothing inherently tragic about such a single truth of life. What, however, makes the play of *Macbeth* peculiarly pointed and pregnatic is the fact that the desire to obtain the good things of life is met with its opposite through the half-conscious evil deeds of the individual committing such deeds whether voluntarily or

through the influence of agents outside his own personality. Such an ironic situation is the very pointed circumstance revealed in *Macbeth*, and the tragedy of the situation is precisely in this irony of fate or of circumstances.

The side-issue of such a deed ; and conduct of Macbeth which also points to another lesson following from the first is that once a man enters into evil he will no more be able to control it as he wishes it to be controlled. Macbeth, of course, never imagined that the murder of Duncan would precipitately lead him into those series of terrific slaughters which ultimately brought about his ruin and tragedy. His momentary realisation of the consequences of Duncan's murder limited itself to the practical grasping of the kingship of the country and for such a power he was prepared to pay the price of Duncan's murder. But we know from the events in *Macbeth* that the murder of Duncan was only a preliminary crime which hurled the hero from off his balance and made him wade through innocent blood before he knew where he was ; all which points to the moral that once man lends himself to evil he will never he able to control its consequences which would ultimately envelope the evil-doer in its own irresistible might and influence.

In brief, then, the tragedy of *Macbeth* indicates that evil is never to be encouraged with the false hopes that it excites in the mind of the evil-doer. And the irony of circumstances points to the fact that even good intentions are not enough. As the popular saying has it, the path to hell is paved with good intentions. Macbeth deluded himself that he was only wishing by the murder of his master to equip himself with all the monarchial glory and splendour and that this would automatically bring him honour and obedience and love and friendship. Poor Macbeth! How little did he realise that it was these very things that he was denied, was destined to be denied because he had recourse to evil means to encompass good end.

Q. 31. Discuss Shakespeare's handling the problem of Feee Will and Necessity with reference to the character of Macbeth.

Ans. It would appear from the evidence of the tragedies of Shakespeare that he has handled this question of Free Will and Necessity in a profoundly significant manner. It may be stated without any sense of paradox that Shakespeare says both yes and no to the question whether mastery by man over his fate is possible or not. Man, says Shakespeare, is both free and not free to do what he likes. To simple logic such a statement might appear as extremely unwise and absurd, but logic is not all-important when considering emotional responses and reactions of persons placed in a tragic situation. The truth is that man is both free to do what he likes and not free with regard to the consequences of those acts for which he was voluntarily a party. There is always a choice offered to us in every conceivable situation of human affairs, and it is perfectly open to us whether to accept or refuse to accept that situation. But once having made the choice and having accepted or denied it, man is no longer free; he is hemmed in by the consequences of his actions, and this limitation of his freedom consequent upon his action is what we understand by the term Necessity. Thus we see that there is no inherent contradiction in the statement that apparently man is both free and not free to do what he likes. As a character in one of Shakespeare's tragedies puts it:

"Our wills are ours",

but as he further says, not the ends to which the wills lead men. In other words, the minds of Shakespeare's tragic characters are left entirely free, their thoughts belong to them, but the consequences of those thoughts and acts are none of their own. They do something and expect certain consequences: and their tragedy lies in their realisation that their expectations were delusions and that real happenings are just the opposite of what they fondly expected.

Such a reading of the tragic situation in a Shakespearean play seems to be evident from an examination of the actions of his tragic heroes. The hero in *Macbeth*, for example, has been given a choice at the very beginning of the play. That choice, as we know, is the choice of either accepting or rejecting the promptings of evil which he is made to face dramatically in the form of witches and their prophecies. It was perfectly

open to Macbeth either to lend himself to the evil influences or to resist that influence altogether. In fact Banquo who accompanies Macbeth in the same scene and situation does not accept what Macbeth does accept. So both men were free in the initial tragic situation with which they were faced. When we say man has a free will we mean this freedom to accept or reject any situation that we happen to be faced with. But Macbeth having once accepted the situation, could never be free from the consequences that naturally follow from his acceptance. This is what we mean when we say that man is hemmed in by Necessity. Our deeds are ours, as another character in Shakespeare's tragedies puts it, but not their ends. In this way we see that Shakespeare admits of both Free Will and Necessity in his conception of tragedy. He does not indulge in the mistakes of those extremists of the kind who make men either superhuman or, on the other hand, mere helpless marionettes dancing to the tune of an invisible evil. This position will be clear to us if we realise the fact that Macbeth, in the present example, could as well not have accepted the prophecy of the witches. If he had done so (as Banquo certainly does), there would have been no tragedy at all. If Macbeth complains in the end that he has no honour, love, obedience and troops of friends, we can only say that he himself drove away all these by his evil deeds. How could one honour a murderer of his own royal guest? How is one to befriend him who obeys no laws, justice and truth? Clearly Macbeth has murdered not Duncan only but all sleep, honour, love, obedience and friendship by one single stroke of his dagger at the breast of Duncan. How foolish, pathetically foolish, of Macbeth not to have foreseen that his very witches had told him that the sons of Banquo would rule Scotland after himself? How did he fail to see that his own sons could not hope to be sovereigns of Scotland except by supposing that he could not object to the murdering of Banquo as well as Duncan? All this moral blindness of Macbeth was a result of his own hasty misdeeds and an overwhelming influence of the combined forces of witches and of his own wife. But whatever these influences might have been, Macbeth himself was undoubtedly free to choose his good destiny. By not doing so, he entangled himself in the iron laws of Necessity

which were the results of his own voluntary choosing and which ultimately led to his ruin and tragedy. Hence we can say that in the tragedy of *Macbeth* Shakespeare has made it abundantly clear that man is both free and limited in his life, he is free in the sense that in everything that he does he is offered a choice of conduct; he could choose whichever of the alternatives open to him but the moment he makes a choice and commits himself to a particular course of conduct, his freedom vanishes; the consequences following from his action are none of his. Such, in sum, is the handling of this problem of Free Will and Necessity in the tragedies of Shakespeare.